

BILLIARDS.

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BILLIARDS:

GAME, 500 UP.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ABOVE GAME,

ILLUSTRATED BY

DIAGRAMS,

SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE BALLS
FOR THE LAST NINE BREAKS;

ALSO

One Hundred and Sixty-three Diagrams
WELL ADAPTED FOR PRACTICE.

WITH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS,

AND ADVICE RESPECTING THE ADVANTAGE OF PLAYING
WITH GOOD STRENGTHS:

THE MERITS OF THE GAMES OF MR. ROBERTS AND
MR. KENTFIELD DISCUSSED:
THE CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDED.

BY

EDWARD RUSSELL MARDON, ESQ.

Third Edition,

EXTENSIVELY ENLARGED AND GREATLY IMPROVED.

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MADRAS ARTILLERY

TO
THE MARQUIS OF DONEGALL,
AN OPPONENT OF MANY YEARS,

This Work

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

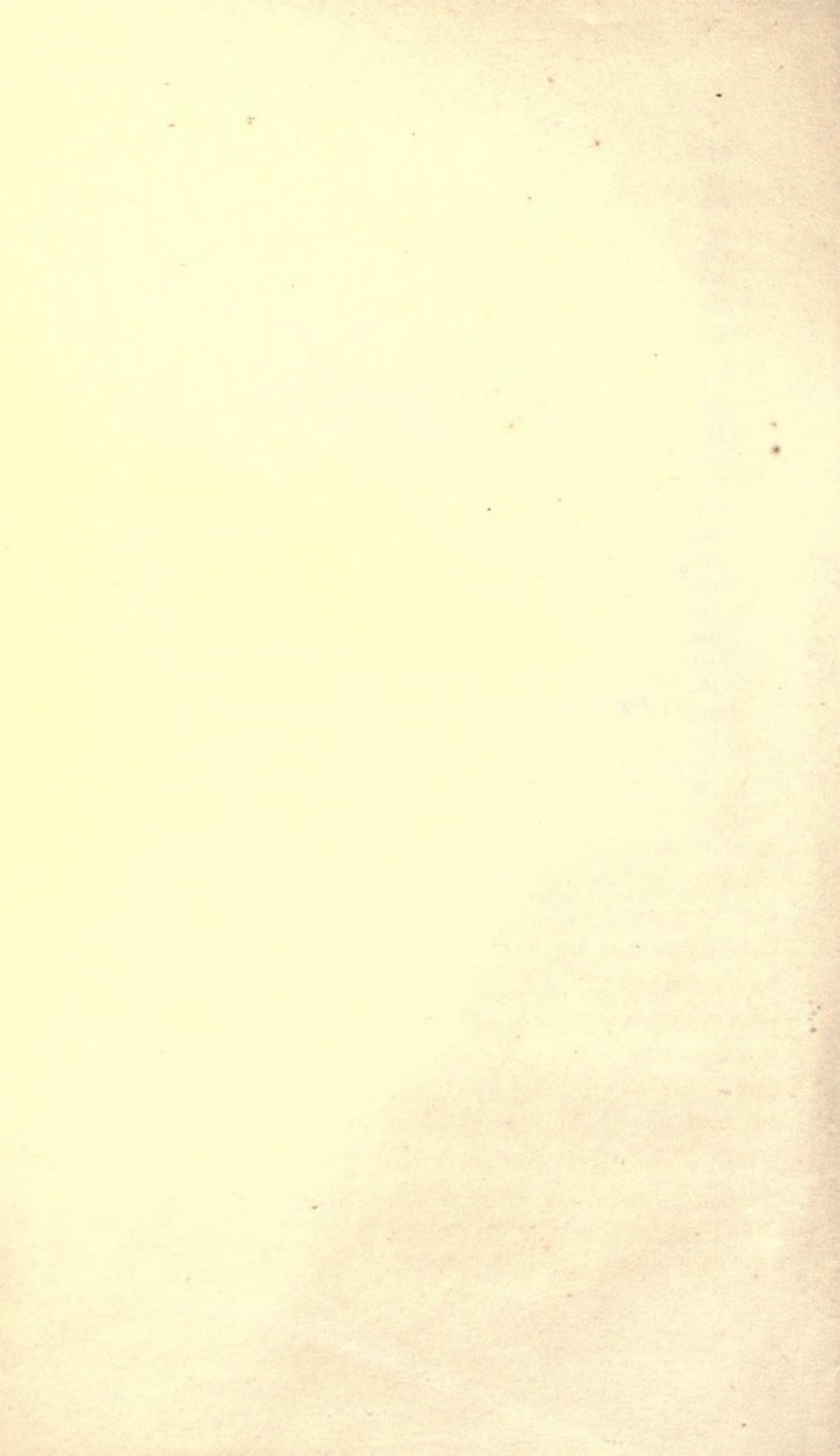
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ERRATUM.

Page 24, line 16, *for* out the baulk, *read* out of the baulk.



BILLIARDS.

"THE WISE AND ACTIVE CONQUER DIFFICULTIES BY DARING TO ATTEMPT THEM. SLOTH AND FOLLY SHIVER AND SHRINK AT SIGHT OF TOIL AND HAZARD, AND MAKE THE IMPOSSIBILITY THEY FEAR."

"LET US TO BILLIARDS."—SHAKSPEARE.

"ALTHOUGH GENIUS LIGHTS ITS OWN FIRE IT IS NECESSARY TO COLLECT MATERIALS TO KEEP ALIVE THE FLAME."

KNOWLEDGE IS THE PRIZE OF APPLICATION.

GOOD STRENGTHS THE FIRST CONSIDERATION.

At what period the game of Billiards (invented by the French) was introduced into England has not been ascertained; but, as mention has been made of it by Shakespeare, it must, at all events, have been known in the sixteenth century. On inspecting some of the old-fashioned Tables, it is probable that those in use at the above-named period of time were of larger dimensions than the modern; and as the game known by the title of "The White Game" was in general use even within the last hundred years, it is likely that it was then universally adopted. The only argument I can bring forward against such a probability is the circumstance of the immortal bard having put into the mouth of Cleopatra the following words—"Let us to Billiards :" for, if no other game was then in use, the monotonous nature of that alluded to seems scarcely to have offered sufficient attraction to a Queen who could

have pursued it only for the enjoyment it was likely to produce. When the third or red ball was first brought into notice is likewise doubtful to ascertain ; but, as the game styled "The Winning Game" is almost the only one played by the French even in our days, it is probable that we are also indebted to that nation for its introduction ; and the varieties of the game so called being greater than those which were to be found in that in which the white balls only were used, it took precedence and became the most fashionable. In making a losing hazard, the dimensions of the pocket can be much enlarged by the use of the side stroke ; and, in playing for a canon, if with two-inch balls, the space allowed for its accomplishment is equal to six inches ; but in the winning hazard, if the pockets of the Table be small, there will be scarcely more opening than the width of a ball and a half ; consequently, there is not any part of the game of Billiards that presents so many difficulties as a winning hazard, and when nearly the length of the Table intervenes betwixt the balls, the uncertainty is considerably increased. When scarcely any other game was played, he that excelled in the winning hazard possessed a great advantage, which was verified and turned to good account by a gentleman recognized formerly by the appellation of "The Dutch Baron." This celebrated player, when in Lendon, frequented a room that was then in great request, in St. James's Street, and, being desirous of playing for large stakes, he attracted a numerous assembly. At the commencement, whether from want of knowledge of the Table or other causes, he appeared to have the worst of the matches ; but still the desire to back

himself was undiminished. After a short sojourn, he quitted the Metropolis for Bath, which becoming known, some of the frequenters of the room, regretting his departure, quickly followed him, anticipating, doubtlessly, a golden harvest. If I am to give credit to the information I have received—and I have it from the best authority—the flight of the Baron was a ruse. Forming a judgment from the observations he had made, he opined that, by retreating from the ground on which he had first shewn battle, the victors would imagine he was anything but sanguine in the result of future engagements, and that so manifest a display of weakness would induce his opponents to pursue him. The finale will shew, in this particular, that he, like other skilful generals, gained, from a retreat judiciously planned and effectively carried out, a complete and signal victory. Amongst the players most desirous of renewing matches was a gentleman who had returned from India with a considerable fortune, every shilling of which was won by the Baron !

The object, however, in relating these particulars is to shew the importance that was attached in those days to the superiority of winning-hazard striking, when combined with a knowledge of just and proper strengths, since the great success that attended the Baron arose principally from the skill he displayed in managing what is now termed the “spot” stroke; for whenever the red ball was spotted, and the Baron’s ball sufficiently near to present a certain hazard, the game was considered over. In those days (fifty years since), making seven red hazards in succession in the two corner pockets was deemed a masterly performance;

but improvement and progress have so rapidly advanced that, within the last fifteen years—a friend of mine, a Colonel in the Army, being present—Mr. Kentfield completed similar hazards fifty-seven times!! Were I to relate all the extraordinary performances of Mr. Kentfield at the period when list cushions and pockets of large dimensions were in vogue, the reader would imagine I was bordering on romance; but it is not my intention to record a single circumstance that cannot be corroborated by persons who were present at the time it occurred.

On one occasion, when playing the winning game, 21 up, Mr. Kentfield gave his opponent 18 points, and won sixteen following games.

In playing the winning and losing game, 24 up, he won ten games, his adversary never scoring! The games were thus played:—Mr. Kentfield, in playing off, doubled the red ball for one of the baulk corner pockets, placing his own ball under the side cushion. His opponent played to drop it into the corner pocket, failed, and left on each occasion a canon; that was made, and the games were all won off the balls!

At another time he was playing the non-cushion game, 16 up. On going off he twisted his ball into the corner pocket from the red, and won, in that manner, six games, his adversary not having a stroke!!

Desirous of ascertaining how many games of 24 up could be played within the hour, he commenced the task with a player of considerable eminence; and they completed thirty games within the specified time.

Forty-seven games of 100 up were also played in eight hours and a half.

In a match that did not exceed 200 games, he beat his opponent eighty-five love games.

The greatest number of points made off the balls by Mr. Kentfield was one hundred and ninety-six !

I have been given to understand, within the last few months, that Mr. Roberts, Superintendent of the Billiard Rooms at the Union Club in Manchester, is considered by his friends of that neighbourhood to be equal to any player in Europe ; and, in order to afford me an opportunity of judging of his skill, balls have been placed in situations of considerable difficulty, and I have been assured that hazards thus presented came quite within his power of cue. I have also been informed that, in playing a game of 100 up, his opponent, aware of, and dreading, his ability, ran a coup at 96 love, hoping, by so prudent and cautious a proceeding, to insure winning the game. Mr. Roberts, playing from the baulk circle, twisted into one of the corner pockets from the ball upon the spot, and made, from a break so unpromising, 102 points from the red ball alone ! The greatest number of points made off the balls by this extraordinary player was 208.

Admitting, however, this information to be correct, still wonderful and surprising execution does not constitute either a sterling or a successful player ; and when I take into consideration the advantages to be derived from playing the game called "One pocket to five," and learn that Mr. Kentfield has played upwards of fifty thousand games with one gentleman alone, I cannot but imagine that an experience so great, united with his matchless skill, must not only elevate him above all other players, but fully entitle him to the

paramount laudatory remarks with which his name will be found to be associated.

Whilst making, however, such a statement, it is but justice to Mr. Roberts to admit that others think differently; and gentlemen with whom he is in the habit of playing, and several strangers with whom I have conversed, entertain as exalted an opinion of his powers as I do of those of Mr. Kentfield. But when I call to mind, and reflect upon, the wonderful execution displayed while playing the commanding game over the Table, and the game of one pocket to one pocket, *commanded*,* I have no hesitation in saying that on such occasions, his power of cue has gone beyond what even the imagination could embrace. I have seen him, like a man inspired, accomplish, stroke after stroke, hazards and canons, against which I, with my knowledge of the game, would have laid fifty to one! From his cue I have witnessed that which I am confident I shall never see again; and, although luminaries may shine forth in other spheres, Mr. Kentfield, the electric light of mine, must, I think, dim their lustre and keep them in the shade.

Were nothing more required to make a finished, perfect player, than what might be found in fine hazard striking, we should, perhaps, never have met with any one to have surpassed Mr. George Howse; and if the mental qualification connected with the game had exceeded, or even equalled, his astonishing execution, he might probably have laid claim to a champion's

* The gentleman thus engaged was considered formidable at that particular game. After his defeat, I inquired how he could have been beaten at such a match. He replied, "by his performing IMPOSSIBILITIES,"

wreath. On a day unfavourable to out-door exercise I was practising for an hour with the last-named person. We placed the balls as they are represented in Plate 60, and tried who could make the greater number. On going off, Mr. Howse holed the red ball in the same corner pocket two-and-twenty times, and continued scoring up to 92 points. The balls having been replaced, I commenced; and although I could not play the red ball with the excellence displayed by him, I nevertheless passed him by three or four points, and, being desirous of completing the hundred, I missed the last canon in attempting to graze the ball; for had I got what billiard-players would term "thicker" upon it, no other score would have been left. So great a run from the balls would be, with reference to myself, of rare occurrence; but from the cue of Mr. Howse an extraordinary sequence might at all times be expected.

The players of eminence next to those already mentioned, within my own knowledge, are Mr. Bedford and Mr. Pratt, each celebrated for quietude of demeanour and elegance of style. The former is particularly graceful and unassuming, excelling in winning hazards, whilst all are made without apparent effort. Persons at all conversant with Billiards are perfectly aware of the difficulties attending the game known under the denomination of "The Go-Back Game;" yet Mr. Bedford is frequently called upon to play it, even 21 up, without the assistance of the losing hazards! The greatest number of points made off the balls by Mr. Bedford was one hundred and fifty-nine. Of Mr. Pratt's game I have not seen sufficient to enable me to form an opinion with respect to its strength, but the following

anecdote will afford the reader an opportunity of judging:—One evening, when most persons were enjoying their claret by the fireside, a gentleman presented himself in the Billiard Room, where Pratt was seated alone. To a request whether he was desirous of playing, he replied in the affirmative. The lights were placed, and the parties took their stations at the Table: “What game, Sir, would you wish to play?” “I will play,” replied the stranger, “the game of 100 up; and as it is my desire that you should be rewarded for your trouble, I will play for sixpence!” The game commenced; and after the gentleman had once or twice struck the balls, he left his opponent’s ball near the red, which, fortunately for Pratt, being on the spot, he continued to hole in the two corner pockets four-and-thirty times, beating his liberal antagonist a love game, 100 up!

There was, some years since, at Bath, a marker of the name of Carr, who, although perhaps not quite so fine a player as the persons already named, possessed power of executing certain wonderful strokes, dependent upon the side twist, greater than that of any other professor. It has been stated that the advantages derived from striking the ball upon its side was discovered by Carr; but, whether it emanated from him or from another, it is certain that to the players and frequenters of the rooms at Bath it was as novel as it was surprising, and visitors, anxious to acquire an art, not only extremely useful, but one that imparts to the game numerous beauties, were unceasing in their inquiries respecting a secret through whose means they hoped to obtain similar power. After turning for a time a closed

ear to their solicitations, Carr at length apprised them that the wonders producing so much interest were effected by the use of a twisting chalk that he had lately invented, and which he had then on sale. All eagerly purchased ; and he assured them it afforded him much pleasure in complying with their requests. To carry out his views, he procured a number of small pill-boxes, and, filling them with the powder of the chalk commonly used in the room, sold it to a host of credulous customers at half-a-crown per box ! How greatly soever fortune might have smiled upon Carr whilst engaged in the noble game of Billiards, there was unfortunately another, of a royal character, that held him captive, engrossing all his thoughts—all his spare time, and which, notwithstanding hours of devotion offered at the shrine of the presiding goddess of his idolatry, produced nothing but misfortune. Wearied with disasters, disappointed in his expectations of success, and discontented with circumstances immediately connected with his professional pursuits, he came to the determination of “ seeking his fortune” in another clime, and at once embarked for Spain.

Presenting himself at the Billiard Rooms of the various towns through which he passed, he succeeded in beating and in thoroughly astonishing every competitor that dared to approach him. Performing feats, by means of the side twist, far beyond their power of conception, he realized a very considerable sum ; but, ere it could be employed in a way that would have proved of service to him in a time of need, he again fell back upon his former habits, and, unfortunately, once more fully entered into the destructive game from

which he had previously been so great a sufferer. The fickle goddess still proving adverse to his hopes, he was under the necessity of retracing his steps, and finally landed at Portsmouth with scarcely a shoe to his foot. Whether players of those days were less particular than persons of the present period is not for me to determine ; but it is no less strange than true, that, even in so deplorable a garb, he no sooner made his appearance at the Billiard Table than he met with a gentleman willing to contend. From this person he won, I believe, seventy pounds ; and, quitting the room with the money in his pocket, he lost no time in discovering a shop at which he could get "fully and completely rigged." Attired in a blue coat, yellow waistcoat, drab small-clothes, and top boots, he paid on the following day another visit to the same room, where it happened that he met his antagonist of the previous day, who, being a fine player and devoted to the game, lost no time in challenging the stranger to play. The result of this match terminated as the former, and Carr once more became a considerable winner. At the close of the match the gentleman observed that he was truly unfortunate in having met with, on succeeding days, two persons capable of giving him so severe a dressing. Carr, making himself known, thanked the gentleman for the metamorphosis his money had occasioned, and wished him a good morning.

There was also, a few years since, an excellent player of the name of May. His nerves, enfeebled from dissipation, incapacitated him from playing up to his game, when opposed to a player of nearly equal merit ; but, when contending against weak antagonists, he

could play brilliantly. His excellence in managing the spot stroke, even upon the fast modern Tables, seemed to realize everything effected by others upon slower Tables and with larger pockets. A friend of mine, Captain Jackson, well known as a formidable player, informed me that he went to the rooms kept by May for the purpose of testing his game. May played with him "The Go-Back Game," 50 up, giving 20 points! He won every game from the spot stroke.

It frequently occurs that a fine hazard-striker, and one that is successful when only playing for the Tables, is repeatedly beaten by a player apparently inferior when there is money on the game; and after witnessing, on several occasions, a most brilliant performance for a small stake, I have frequently seen the victor challenged by the defeated party for twenty times the amount, and the gauntlet thus vauntingly thrown at his feet remained untouched; but if the player, thus bearded, could have placed the smallest reliance upon his brilliant execution, he would at once have vindicated the honour of his cue, and have sought to convince his presumptuous antagonist that the largeness of the stake could not effect any alteration in his game. Such, however, has never been the case within my experience; for I have always observed that a player, playing a game, experimentally brilliant, has been invariably beaten when most desirous of winning. If, therefore, the rash, florid play, proceeding generally from a passion for display, is really worthless when success is most demanded, how silly and how inconsistent must it be to persist in cherishing a style of game that subjects the performer, not only to the annoyance of losing the

stake for which he plays, but also to the mortification of discovering that the mode adopted possesses no other recommendation than that derived from the pleasure of surprising the assembled throng by the execution of a few strokes of remarkable power. Within the last few years I played repeatedly with a gentleman of such description. When there was no one present but the marker, he would play a sound defensive game, and on such occasions it was very difficult to beat him ; but when the room was filled by an admiring audience he pitched discretion to the winds, and willingly sacrificed the stake for which he played to the desire of accomplishing a stroke that should draw down the admiration of those assembled. Similar players are everywhere to be met with ; but he who backs them will be left without a guinea.

“ How strange, how passing strange ! ” that a game so beautiful and exquisite as Billiards, and so generally played, is understood but by few ; for, amongst the host that play, not one in a thousand attains to eminence, whilst many indeed, after years of application, forsake it altogether, from incapacity to pass mediocrity. Yet the game, if properly explained, is within the capacity of a child,* not requiring more than a lady’s physical

* A youth was engaged by Mr. Bedford as a supernumerary attendant at his rooms. Previous to his engagement he had never seen a Billiard-table. When alone in the room he amused himself by knocking the balls about, and evinced, in a short time, great aptness for the game. Observing this, I was induced to give him a little instruction, and to place the balls in situations presenting the best kind of practice. In three months he could make, by means of the side twist, the losing hazard presented in Plate 47 ; the canon described in Plate 92 ; six losing hazards were also made in succession in the centre pockets (see Plate 52) ; and, in playing

strength. To form a sterling, successful player, the following is a good system for adoption :—If the hazard presented appears to be two to one against accomplishment, it should never be undertaken if the player has the best of the game: the ball of the adversary should be dropped to a cushion, or the red ball doubled to a situation of equal security. The opponent, being behind in the game, will probably feel justified in running a risk; or his lack of coolness or want of patience may induce him to fall into the very error against which the player has now received, I trust, sufficient caution. If, under either of the feelings described, the antagonist is induced to play at a ball that will militate against him, he will play to disadvantage, and must eventually suffer through presumption and want of prudence. By pursuing a rigid system of defence until a fair or common hazard be presented, a habit of easy scoring is acquired, and the facility, or rather certainty, of making all that is attempted begets a confidence, a moral courage, extremely difficult to be subdued; whereas the player who is constantly attempting canons and hazards beyond his ability becomes, on failure, nervously excited, and at length is so dreadfully agitated that the game stroke is frequently missed, although its accomplishment appeared to be a certainty.

In a criticism on the smaller work I first sent forth, it was stated that, how strongly soever the work might be recommended to young players, Mr. Kentfield, apparently the “god of my idolatry,” would never

a game 50 up, he made 21 points off the balls. Six months after I saw him give 12 points in 24 to a gentleman that had played at Billiards twenty years.

have been so formidable as he now is had he followed the instructions therein promulgated. But the writer of that article must allow me to declare that if an appeal be made to Mr. Kentfield, he will at once admit that he has both “preached and practised the doctrine for the last twenty years.”* Desirous of ascertaining the capabilities of the person superintending his Subscription Room, Mr. Kentfield played with him a trial game of 300 up, giving 90 points; and so equally and ably was it contested, that their respective scores reached 294 to 297. On this occasion, certainly most anxious to win, he never once attempted a score that appeared to be more than three to two against accomplishment; in fact, so defensively was the game contested, that neither party, with one exception, scored more than five-and-twenty in succession, and then Mr. Kentfield made upwards of forty.† A great beauty of the game of Billiards, full of interest, demonstrating its sterling and valuable qualities, consists in being enabled to work a promising break of the balls to the greatest advantage; and this can only be accomplished by the aid of judicious

* The words of Mr. Kentfield, uttered in the presence of Mr. Fobisher, Mr. Robertson, and myself.

† The Table in the Subscription Room is extremely difficult. It is perhaps, the fastest in England, and has pockets of the smallest dimensions. A run of forty points will be justly appreciated when it is stated that the best of players would, in all probability, be defeated, were they to back themselves to score four-and-twenty points from the most promising break. The spot for the red ball is barely twelve inches from the lower cushion; the baulk circle only eighteen inches in extent. On many Tables the spot is thirteen inches from the cushion; the baulk circle two-and-twenty. Upon such Tables, with large pockets, Mr. Kentfield would scarcely cease to score.

strengths, leaving the balls, after scoring, in such positions that another and another score will be presented. To effect this—the most fascinating as well as the most serviceable feature in the game—I recommend the player to take the trouble of practising the breaks as they are exhibited in some of the diagrams; for in no other way can he expect to acquire a correct knowledge of the precise and necessary strengths requisite for playing upon Tables that produce great speed.

A short time since, two gentlemen, desirous of improvement, received instruction from a popular Professor. He taught them the use of the side stroke, and made them acquainted, through that agency, with a variety of canons and hazards that could not be otherwise accomplished. A certain number of lessons completed, the parties, imagining their play improved, recommenced their daily practice with the marker; but they had the mortification of discovering that he succeeded in beating them even more easily than he had done before. The friends, renouncing him as a competitor, made arrangements for playing together in a private room, the marker being in attendance. From some cause, not necessary to explain, it was suggested that the marker, during the games, should direct each party in their play, and should also instruct him in the proper manner of performing it. The attendant, in every respect qualified for the task, spared no pains in making his pupils thoroughly acquainted with the correct method of playing each break; and, by shewing them how easily one good canon or hazard could be succeeded by another when played with proper strength, he, in the course of a short period, by this method, so

greatly improved them, that, at the close of his instruction, he was not enabled to give them by five-and-twenty points out of a hundred as many as he had previously done ! But if the gentlemen had continued experimentalizing, and depending only for success upon hazard-striking and their newly-acquired side-stroke style of game, they would in all probability have remained in ignorance of the great secret by means of which the all-important side-stroke power, recently taught them, had been brought into complete and effective operation. This fact not only sustains, but strengthens, the truth of the doctrine I have at all times advanced, that curious side twists, with here and there brilliancy of execution, have nothing whatever to do with the game of Billiards ; and players relying upon a system so treacherous and so uncertain will invariably find themselves defeated by those wise enough to place their sole dependence upon science and discretion, rendering physical force subservient to the triumph of mind.

“The seat of the mind is in the brain. Enclosed within the skull, it has no communication with external nature except through the medium of the senses. The senses are the channels through which the brain receives intelligence. When the eye receives the impression of the thing presented, that impression is carried to the brain, and it is there received by the mind. It is the mind—through the operation of the brain, the optic nerve, and the eye—that sees : the eye itself is only an instrument of vision and recognition. Such is the ordinary process of seeing and of having a consciousness of what is presented to the eyes ; and

thus the outer organ of vision performs but an inferior part in the operation." To those placing reliance upon the above quotation it will be apparent that excellence can alone proceed from the mind ; and, the mind being influenced and acted upon by the senses, it will be of the utmost importance to remember that the senses, in turn, are governed by, and are under the immediate control of the nervous system ; consequently, players at all excitable, or of weak nerves, should never attempt to back themselves for a stake that could possibly affect them.* Inferior players have been reduced, from nervous excitement, to a state bordering upon prostration ; and I have seen them incapable of imparting to a ball even sufficient strength to enable it to reach a destined pocket. This feeling, too, is not confined to any particular class, for players of every grade may be found who suffer from a similar cause. A game was once played on which large sums were depending. The game was called—was repeated by the player. He hesitated ; again demanded the score :—the marker called it. The player then gave a *safe* miss, when his opponent wanted but *one* of the game ! On another occasion, a game was played at Cheltenham, in a room

* The difference between strong nerves and nerves that were weak was exhibited at Mr. Bedford's :—Two gentlemen had for years frequented his Subscription Room, without having taken or proposed a bet. One day a spectator of the game then playing offered to lay 300 to 200 on the result, and, to the surprise of all present, one of the parties to whom allusion is made accepted the proposal. He won the three hundred pounds, and remained as cool as a cucumber. The other gentleman laid a wager of sixpence : during the progress of the game of 24 up he evinced the greatest anxiety, and, upon the marker calling the game, "23 all," actually fainted away.

crowded with spectators, and most of them were interested in the result. The player required but two points to complete the game, and a dead or certain hazard was presented from either ball. The player, in a state of nervous bewilderment, actually played with the red ball!

In another page of this volume will be found a few remarks respecting the absolute necessity of playing with gentle strength upon Tables with Indian-rubber cushions; for, independently of the correctness of angle which such a mode can alone produce, the player will also be enabled to make a much greater number from the balls; and, in order to impress the suggestion still more strongly on the recollection, and to convince the uninitiated of the extreme folly of trusting to strength of arm instead of relying wholly and solely upon judicious strengths, it will be only necessary to state that the severest dressing an excellent player ever received came from a cue directed by the delicate hand of a female. This admission, shewing what may be achieved by a strict system of defence when combined with correct and gentle strengths, ought to render every young player desirous of laying aside the wild, uncertain practice of hard hitting, and induce him to adopt a style of game that will lead, not only to success, but to the development of numerous beauties.

A difference of opinion having existed relative to the merits of the respective force of Mr. Porker and Mr. Mardon, it was arranged that a trial match should take place, Mr. Mardon receiving 25 points out of 500. On the 18th of January, 1844, at Mr. Kentfield's Room, the parties met, and at half-past twelve o'clock the game commenced.

GREAT MATCH AT BILLIARDS.—GAME, 500 UP.

“The match lately played at Brighton between Mr. Mardon and Mr. Porker appears to have been extraordinary throughout, and was, at the finish, most exciting. After the first two or three strokes, Mr. Mardon was 40 to 6. Mr. Porker then passed him, and made his score 53 to 51. From this period the balls, as well as the chance hazards, were much in favour of Mr. Mardon, and he consequently shot greatly ahead, maintaining his advantage until he became 82 points in advance. Three to one was now laid on Mr. Mardon. The game at this point exceeded 300; and, as the light became obscure, it was proposed to have the lamps. Mr. Mardon played ere they were lighted, and left to Mr. Porker the appearance of a great break; but as the ball he had to play with was nearly close to the lower cushion, it was hardly to be expected that he could make the hazard that was to lead to the desirable result. At this moment, however, he prudently awaited the lighting of the lamps, and then accomplished the stroke in question; and it was pronounced by Mr. Kentfield to be as fine a stroke, under such circumstances, as ever was played. As soon as the hazard was made, the greatness of the break became apparent; and it yielded without intermission a run of 37 points! From this moment a most extraordinary change took place. For upwards of half-an-hour Mr. Porker continued to play in the most determined and in the most brilliant style of hazard striking, setting at naught the oft-repeated miss given by

“ Mr. Mardon, and overcoming every movement of
“ defence, either by a chance hazard or by a stroke of
“ very superior power; and in the time stated, and in
“ the manner described, he scored 90 points, while
“ Mr. Mardon could obtain but 7! Still he laboured
“ on in the same quiet and defensive way in which the
“ game was at first commeneed; and thus it continued
“ until Mr. Porker had brought his score to 495 to 475.
“ Mr. Mardon’s ball was now in hand; Mr. Porker’s
“ in the baulk circle; and the red ball midway between
“ the middle and the corner pocket, and about half-a-
“ yard from the cushion. Even at this point, and with
“ such a score against him, Mr. Mardon again tried his
“ favourite game, that of defence, and once more gave
“ what he considered a prudent miss. This made
“ Mr. Porker’s score 496. Four to one was now offered
“ on Mr. Porker; but the game was considered as good
“ as over. Mr. Porker played at the red ball, and
“ failed; and left, at length, to Mr. Mardon an opening
“ and a chance. Mr. Mardon made a rather difficult
“ twist from the red ball into the corner pocket, and
“ doubled it just above the middle one, into which he
“ again held himself; and he then continued scoring
“ canons and hazards until the game was won, and
“ finishing it with as splendid a losing hazard as can
“ well be conceived, making in the last break a run of
“ 25 points! Mr. Mardon was most warmly greeted
“ at the close by a room crowded in every part; and
“ the losers by the game were as loud in their applause
“ as those that were winners, and who were so
“ unexpectedly brought through.

“ Not a bet was offered whilst the player was in the

"act of striking; and no one entered or quitted the room until after the ball had been struck. For such an arrangement much praise is due to Mr. Kentfield."

The above, copied from the London Press, is, I believe, as nearly as can be given, a correct account of the game; and the diagrams that follow will shew the position of the balls for the last nine strokes. I think it will be admitted that the conquest of such a match, under such circumstances, ought to be an encouragement even to the youngest player, since it was effected by one of very moderate execution, and possessing but a limited strength of cue. The game of Billiards, beautiful even to the eye of an inferior player, may be rendered infinitely more so by becoming acquainted with the modern and enlightened mode of playing it; and as this can be accomplished by any amateur, although his arm possess but little power, there can be no reason why a weak player may not become, by practice and proper attention, greatly improved in all the varieties and peculiarities of the game. Fine and first-rate hazard striking does not constitute the scientific billiard-player; and the occurrences of a single day may be sufficient to convince that *caution, coolness, and good strengths* will defeat any player, however great he may be considered as a single-hazard striker. Although devoted to the game, one may proceed, day after day, in the same manner, without improvement, and playing so badly as to become quite disheartened. What is the cause? It is this:—

The hazard presented to the player is made, but, unfortunately, without sufficient reflection and due con-

sideration of what is to follow. The finished billiard-player is he that never makes a score without placing his own ball in such a position that will lead him to expect another, and seeing, in his "mind's eye," the produce of many strokes in advance. This is called playing with good strengths; and it is the performance of these strengths judiciously that constitutes the perfect player. In a game similar to that I have now described there exists not the difficulty that many suppose; and its style may be acquired by any one who will take the trouble to reflect, and who will abandon the rattling mode of striking for one subdued and gentle. Fascinated with the beauties of the side-stroke style of game, it has been to me a source of great enjoyment minutely to observe the method of scientific players; and a residence of a few years in Brighton has enabled me, not only to revel in the pastime, but to gain knowledge from the fountain-head. The name of "Jonathan" is familiar to most billiard-players; but the generality of persons are not aware that Mr. Kentfield, proprietor of the rooms in Manchester Street, is the individual above alluded to. By this person, when engaged in the game, the perfection of the science is exhibited; and however one may feel disposed to laud the abilities of other fine players, he may rest satisfied that a wide distinction lies between them and Mr. Kentfield. The excellence of this great player and really wonderful man is dependent wholly and solely upon strengths and judgment.

In the Billiard World there may be, and no doubt there are, many able to execute a single hazard with equal skill; but in making the most of a good break, and in working the balls with the judicious strengths

leading to great results, Mr. Kentfield stands triumphantly alone ! If strengths, therefore, can elevate him far above all competitors, why should not the amateur —who, like myself, plays simply for amusement—endeavour to cast aside the hard-hitting practice of common-hazard striking, and familiarise himself with a strength that will not only render the noble game far more pleasing, but decorate and adorn it with a thousand charms. The knowledge that I possess of the capabilities of the game is derived from minutely watching the great artist, whilst he is engaged in its operations. Time after time have I observed him contemplating a break that, to myself and other players of the same grade, appeared to be almost worthless ; but no sooner is the first stroke executed than the appearance of the game presents at once another aspect, and the position of the balls then brings to view the enormous score that is likely to follow. In the short game of 24 up it is no uncommon thing to see him make that number in canons alone ; and he will frequently do so without moving the balls more than a span from their original position. On one occasion, in playing a game of greater magnitude, he actually completed as many as two-and-thirty canons in succession !—presenting, I think, a convincing proof of the combined properties of judgment, skill, and strengths. When the red ball is on the spot, and the striker's ball within six inches of and nearly in a straight line with it, a very long run may be obtained, if one can contrive to make each hazard with a proper strength ; and formerly, when the pockets were larger and the old list cushions in use, it was customary with Mr. Kentfield frequently to score one hundred points off this ball alone !

I remember once playing with a gentleman very superior to myself in point of general-hazard striking. The game was 100. My opponent was 99, I only 61. The red ball was on the spot, and my ball was in the position I have above described : I holed the red ball in one or the other of the two corner pockets 13 times in succession, and won the game. Now, if this could be effected with the limited power possessed by myself, it is a convincing proof that good strengths will leave the hazards so extremely easy that their accomplishment will come within the reach of almost any player. On three other occasions I was also playing with superior players. The game, as before, was 100. They were all well advanced, each beyond 90; my ball was in hand, and the red ball in the centre of the Table, about a foot and a half out the baulk. On each occasion I made sixteen losing hazards* off the red ball in the middle pockets, and won the games ! On another occasion I made sixteen losing hazards off the white ball, and won a game that all had given up as lost ! These feats were accomplished by strengths alone ; for each hazard was left so easy that any player could have made it. Strokes similar to these are within the power of any person that really feels an interest in the game, and who will take the trouble to practise them.

Diagrams, shewing the situation of the balls, both for this hazard and for the winning one, from the spot, are annexed ; but, ere they are practised, let me once more recall to the recollection of the reader the necessity of

* A gentleman with whom I had contended, and beaten by means of the losing hazards in the centre pockets, was again solicited to play ; he replied, "I shall let you alone ; your losing hazards are made by machinery."

forsaking all hard blows, and of regulating the strength to the swiftness of the Tables now in use. All have been taught that the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection, and for those who play upon a Table whose cushions are stuffed with list this doctrine is of the utmost importance; but as the cushions of the modern Tables are padded with Indian-rubber, it is necessary to make allowance for throwing off abruptly, if they are played against with any degree of strength. And this fact alone offers another and, I think, a sufficient reason why the strength must be moderated, as a canon, however certain it may appear, if gently played, can never be achieved if played with force. A person striking his own ball always in the centre can become a good and certain hazard striker; but a knowledge of the side twist is absolutely necessary to constitute even a fourth-rate player. Still, in this particular, "a little learning is a dangerous thing," and one must "drink deep or taste not."

Many a time have I seen good hazard strikers of the olden school throw away game after game in a vain attempt to win them after the manner of the present side-stroke fashion. Nevertheless, this knowledge is easily acquired; and when I assert that skill in its use will in some instances enlarge the pocket to more than double its size, its importance will be readily acknowledged. One very great advantage of the side stroke is this,—it will instil a confidence never before experienced: for when the player's ball is properly struck, it receives so great an anxiety to reach the pocket, that it will flutter about it, as it were, and finally drop in; and this too, although it may have struck the

shoulder of the cushion nearly one inch beyond it ! Suffer me again to repeat that this invaluable art is easily acquired, and that it is taught by Mr. Kentfield in a few lesssons.

If a player has commenced in a bad school—imbibed an improper method of standing to his ball, striking, or holding his cue—he may go on for years without improvement; but, if he seek instruction from the professor above-named, he will, in a short space of time, not only be cured of all his former bad habits, but will obtain an enlarged conception of the game, while the execution of difficult, but useful hazards will render the amusement infinitely greater. Diagrams, shewing surprising canons, may be gazed upon for months, and practised by some, hour after hour, in vain; while a person moderately advanced in the game, under the able tuition of Mr. Kentfield, will be capable of performing them at pleasure. Nevertheless, a wonderful side-twist canon off four or five cushions does not make the billiard-player ; and one quite incapable of imparting to a ball the force that would be requisite for the stroke in question, would, by judicious strengths and a proper nursing of the balls, beat this round-about performer to his heart's content.

I have lately seen as fine a hazard striker as could well be witnessed. His winning hazards were almost perfect. He could twist in off the spot, could hole a ball situated at one end of the table, and make his own go straitly back to the other ; yet, with all this brilliancy of execution, when he was contending against what he termed my “niggling” play, he could scarcely win one game in five ! Will not this encourage players

to practise the losing hazards in the middle pockets, and stimulate them to play the only certain game,—that of strengths. In some of the diagrams I have given the position of the balls from which long runs may be accomplished with moderate strength. Canons can be made from three or four cushions; but as they can only be effected by the use of greater force, the goodness of the break that follows will be dependent in a great measure upon chance; but if the player habituate himself to make the hazard or canon before him with gentle strength, he may at all times rely upon obtaining the precise break that he had in contemplation. It has been said by Mr. Kentfield that any bungler can canon full upon a ball; but, in doing it after such a fashion, the balls will, in all probability, be separated and remain safe: whereas, if the second ball hit can be struck upon either of its sides, the two balls will be placed together, and another certain score will be the result. Those gentlemen who have not had the good fortune to witness the game as it is played by Mr. Kentfield, cannot form any very enlarged idea of the extraordinary advantage that is to be derived from proper strengths, when combined with a correct conception of the game. And I have frequently seen this extraordinary man score a run of forty or fifty points, each separate hazard being left so simply that even a novice might have made it. Once more, therefore, let me entreat players to think seriously of the immense advantage of such a mode of playing.

A fine hazard striker, and one that is fond of the elaborate style of game, appears powerful, and is really so, while he plays with confidence and success; but if

the weight of an additional bet should render him at all nervous, it will be seen that his bold and florid style of game has dwindled to a shade, and that all his flashy side-twist canons have been missed instead of being made: whereas, the player of gentle strengths, having no difficulties to encounter, has nothing to dread, nothing to apprehend; and all appearing before him quite within the range of simple-hazard striking, he feels confident of success, and can venture to back himself for any stake.

In a former page I have called attention to the necessity of playing each hazard with a strength that will insure the leaving of another; and it must be obvious that any one hazard, so left, will become the most easy when a simple or common angle is formed; yet it will frequently occur that balls, so placed, will not carry the object ball to the precise position desired: but should the player's ball be in hand, the size of the baulk circle will enable him to place it in a situation to insure success; always bearing in mind that it is far better to miss the hazard altogether, than not to perform it as required. An angle that is called "a common one" is the easiest to execute and the one most to be desired; but, if out of the angle, it must be remembered that a proper use of the side stroke will effect it, and in some instances with less strength. A little consideration perhaps will be required to ascertain if the angle be correctly formed, but Mr. Kentfield can discover it with half a glance. A short time since I was playing with a gentleman who entertained rather a mean opinion of my play, thinking he should have but little trouble in defeating me. I won, I think, the

first four games : then a gallant captain betted him three to two at starting. Continuing still in advance, my opponent was at length under the necessity of confessing that the losing hazards in the centre pockets, played with proper strengths, were far too much for him. My object, however, in making this statement is to point out an occurrence in exemplification of what I have previously stated respecting Mr. Kentfield's knowledge of what can be accomplished from the balls. But to continue. The game was advanced, and both balls were between the baulk line and the centre pockets, my ball being in hand. A gentleman then backed me to win the game, and to win it off the break. I continued to score until I wanted but five of the game, when an unlucky kiss placed the balls in a position that all present pronounced to be safe. A desire, however, to win for the gentleman the bet that he had made induced me to play, as a sort of forlorn hope, to make the red ball knock in the white, and to twist my own ball back into one of the middle pockets. The first part I succeeded in effecting, but I failed in the second : the ball reached the brink of the pocket, but there it stopped. After we had ceased playing, Mr. Kentfield entered the room, and, the balls having been replaced, I informed him of the attempt I had made. He smiled, appeared quite amused, and said, "The score, Sir, was a certainty, if you had known what to have played for ;" when, taking up a cue, he made the hazard a dozen times in succession ; and afterwards, when I attempted the same under his direction, I found it to be quite as simple as he had described it.

My game, though difficult to beat by those who will

not condescend to play defensively, would nevertheless be termed, by the generality of players, a “pottering game.” It signifies one of defence and of simple-hazard striking, free from all gallery clap-trap attraction and from every kind of useless embellishment: the lunge of the elephant entirely laid aside, and the lightness of the antelope substituted in its stead—gliding, in fact, over the surface of the gentle Avon, abandoning the troubled waters of the rapid Rhone. If amateurs habituate themselves to play gently, seldom will they have many difficulties to encounter; for, being consequently near the balls, the hazard or canon will be easily accomplished. The advantage of this style of game would be at once apparent, were players in the habit of practising upon a Table as fast as that in the Subscription Room of Mr. Kentfield, having pockets equally small. Frequently have I seen gentlemen, who were considered good amateur players, degenerate almost to mediocrity when, on most occasions, they have exhibited upon the Table alluded to. It is sometimes the custom here so to place the two balls in order to effect losing hazards in the centre pockets, the player’s ball being in hand. From a break apparently so good, we may generally bet a gentleman-player that he does not score a dozen points! One answering to this description, and supposed, in London, to be a good performer, backed himself at the stroke, and failed; and afterwards, when the number was reduced to ten, could not even accomplish that. But had this gentleman accustomed himself to depend wholly upon strengths, instead of hazard striking, he would not have found much difficulty in the task.

The practice of playing upon Tables with large

pockets is much to be condemned. The hazards become so easy that the player is not under the necessity of taking more than ordinary pains, and he is therefore disposed to make the hazard in a careless, slovenly manner; whereas, to constitute a sterling player, upon a Table of greater difficulty, it is necessary to learn to play every ball to an inch, and to devote to the game the care and attention it deserves. Patronized by the nobility, respected and esteemed by all, placed, and deservedly so, as Mr. Kentfield is on the pinnacle of fame, never have I seen the player that bestowed upon each part of the game a pains-taking equal to his; but, were he to relax or fail in this essential particular, one might look in vain for the beautiful and exquisite precision that accompanies every stroke: nor could he, without such devotion to the strengths, accomplish the extraordinary matches that he is under the necessity of playing. Fancy, for one moment, a disciple of the wild, elaborate school playing the "Go-Back Game" with one pocket to five!

The object of these pages is an humble endeavour to enlist votaries for a healthy recreation; and to induce those already enamoured of the pursuit to abandon the uncertain, dashing style of game, and to adopt one based on simplicity of action combined with proper strengths.

In sending forth this volume, I have not been influenced by a desire of gain, nor have I given way to an egotistical feeling. The interest taken in the game by the number that were present, and the winning of it having been pronounced by Mr. Kentfield to have been "a wonderful performance," induced me to imagine

that diagrams, shewing the position of the balls for the last nine breaks, would prove interesting to those who were not present at the match ; at the same time, they would afford to billiard-players of ordinary power the opportunity of practising the strokes, until five-and-twenty points could be made from balls so placed. My remarks respecting the cushions are made with no other intention than that of endeavouring to impress upon the minds of young and rising players the necessity of resting their hopes of improvement upon the correctness of angle, instead of unnecessary speed.

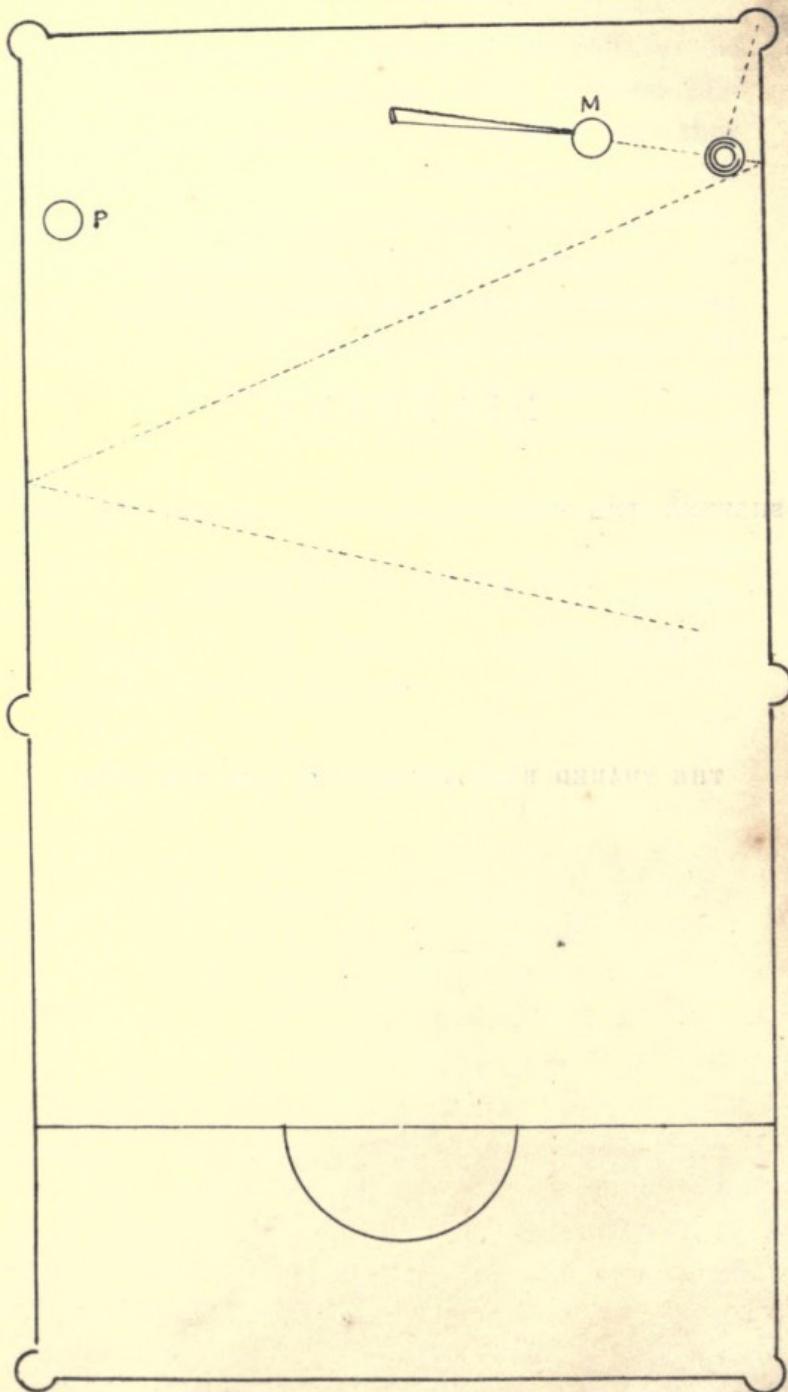
At parting, allow me to impress upon the mind of the reader that the game of Billiards, scientifically played, is one of intellect, instruction, and entertainment, offering to the amateur an endless source of elegant and refined enjoyment.

DIAGRAMS,

SHEWING THE POSITION OF THE BALLS FOR THE LAST
NINE BREAKS IN THE GAME.

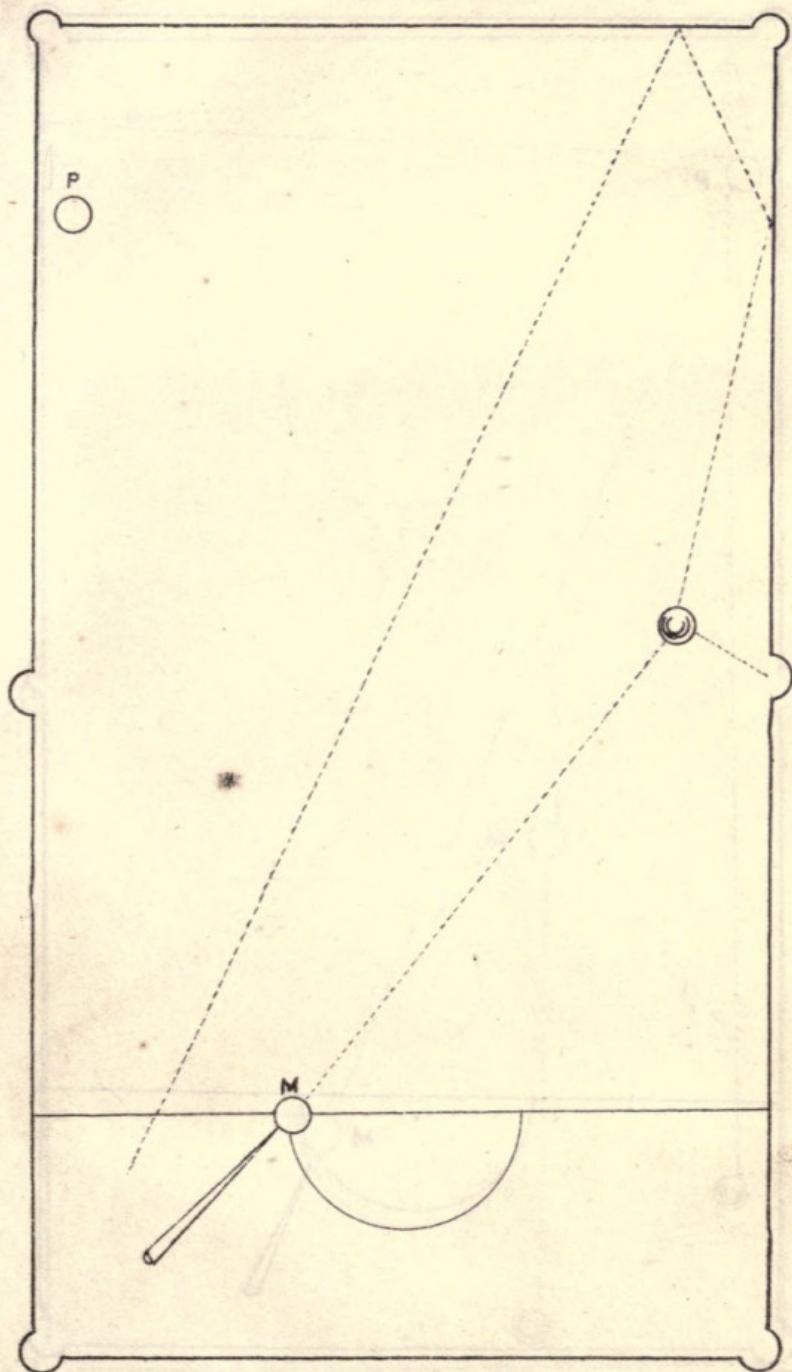
THE SHADED BALL REPRESENTS THE RED BALL.

PLATE I.



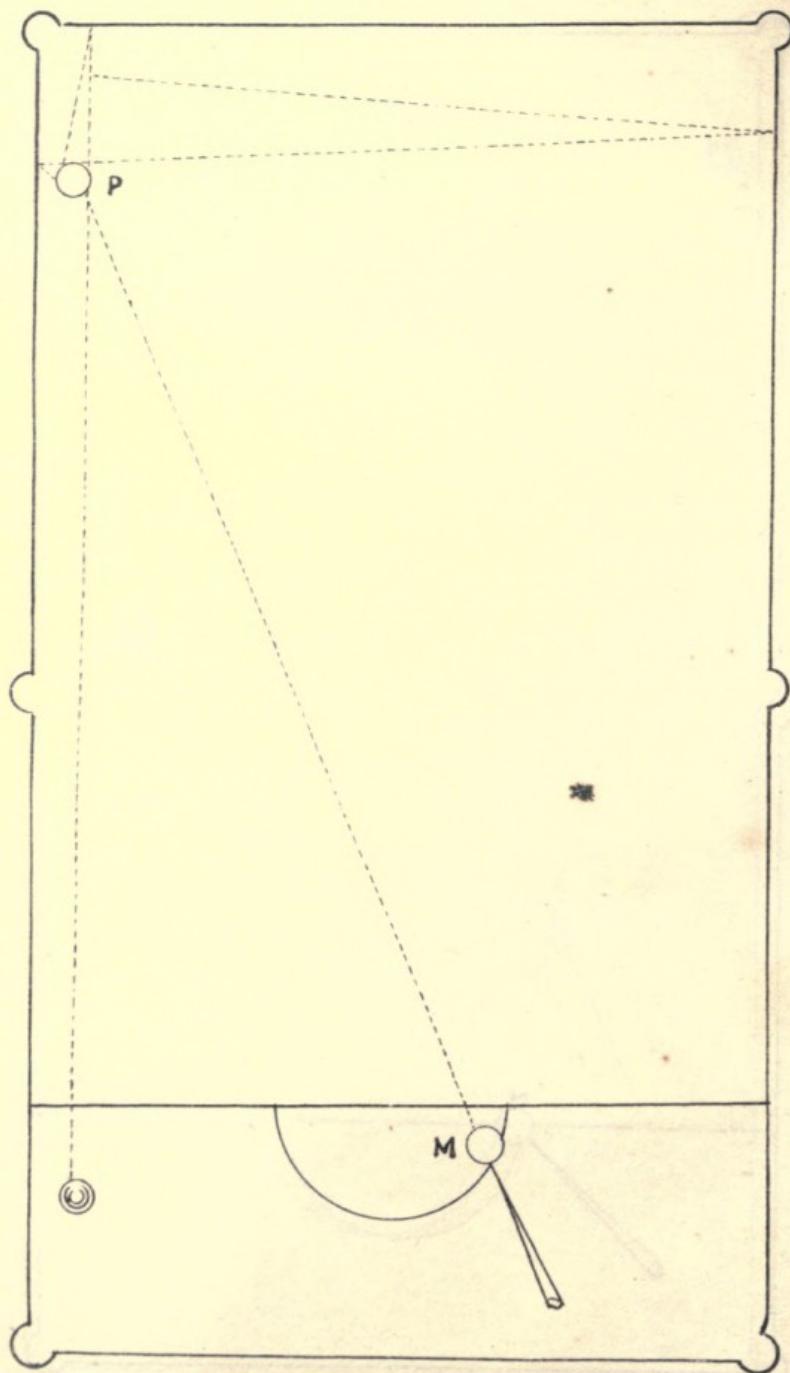
At this stage of the Game, Mr. Porker was 496, and Mr. Mardon 475.
Mr. Mardon played upon the red ball and twisted into the corner pocket,
doubling the red ball just above the centre pocket. Game, 478 to 496.

PLATE 2.



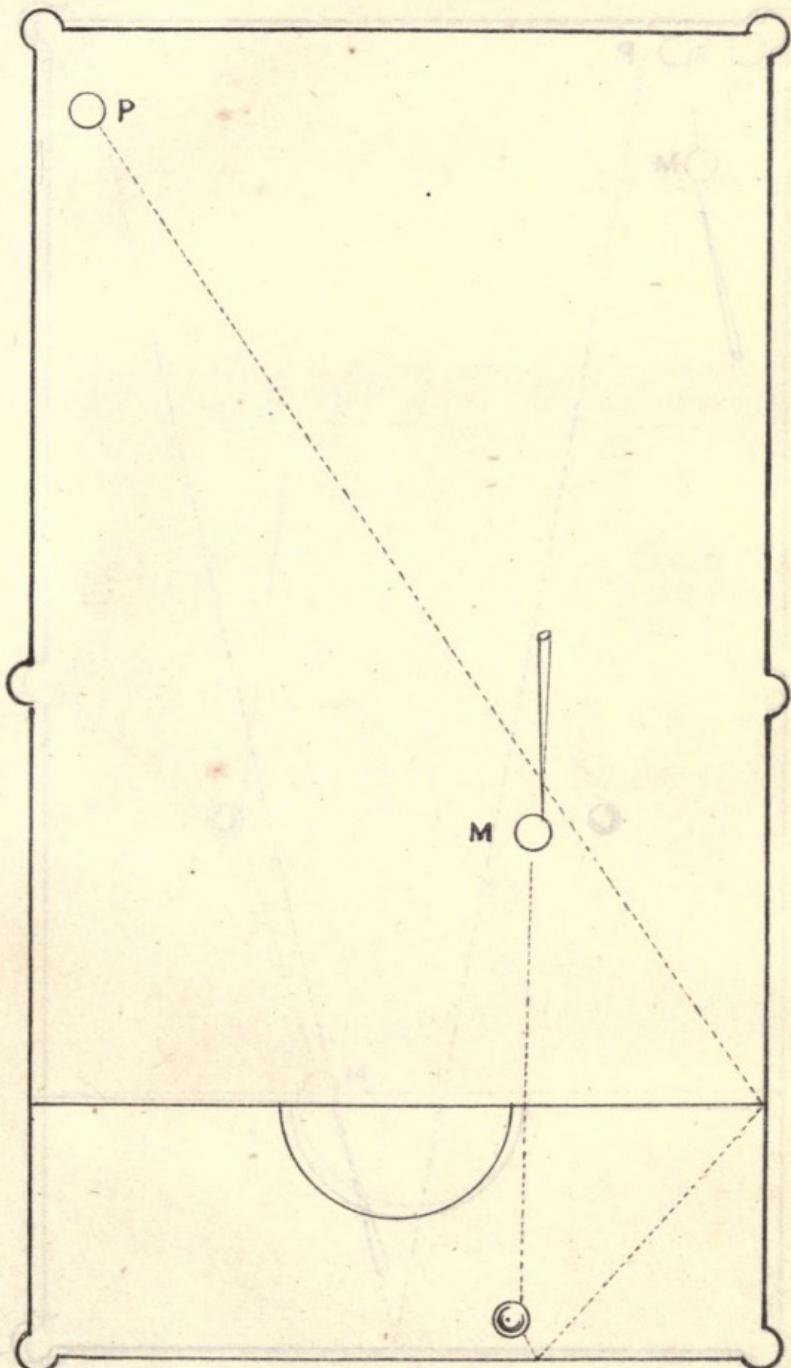
Mr. Mardon twisted into the centre pocket, the red ball coming into the baulk. Game, 481 to 496.

PLATE 3.



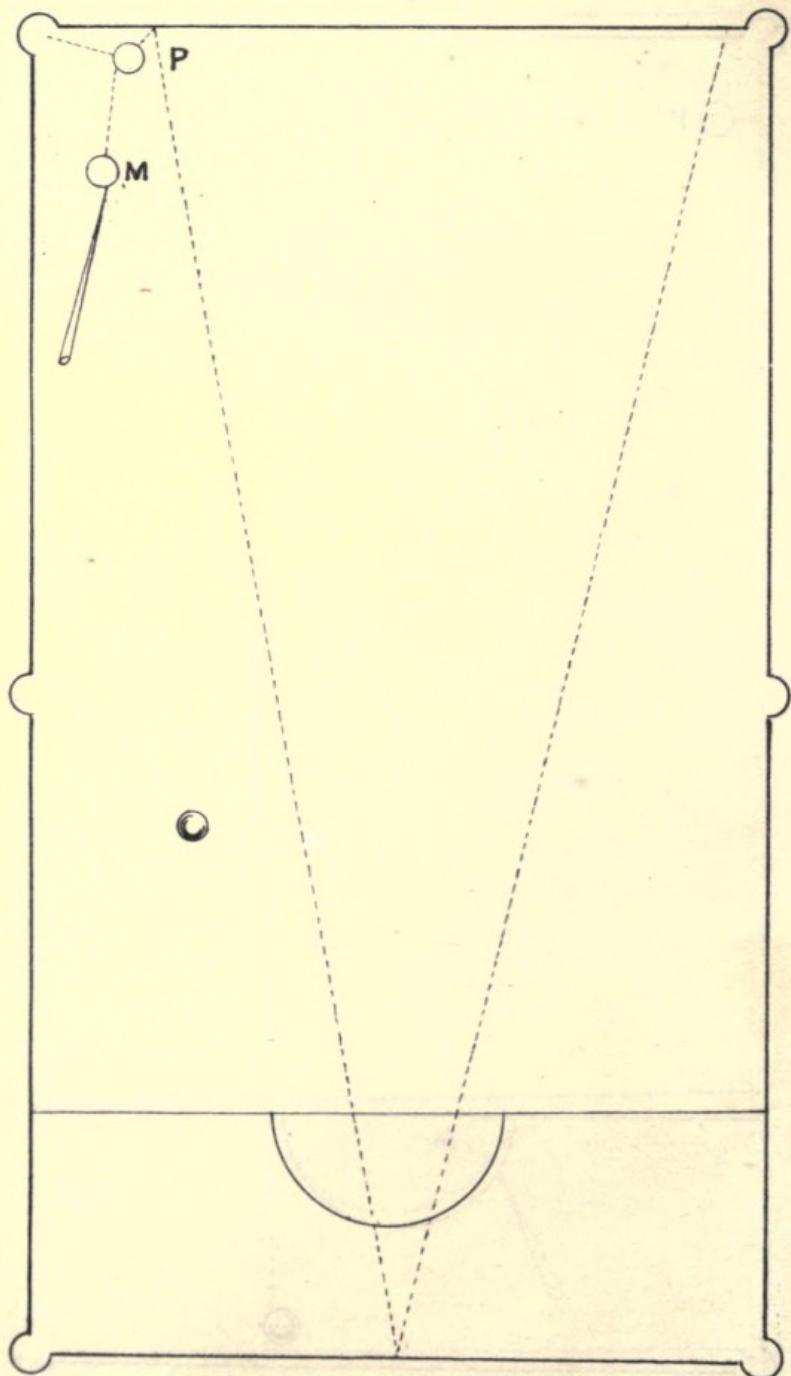
Mr. Mardon played for a canon off the white ball, and made it.
Game, 483 to 496.

PLATE 4.



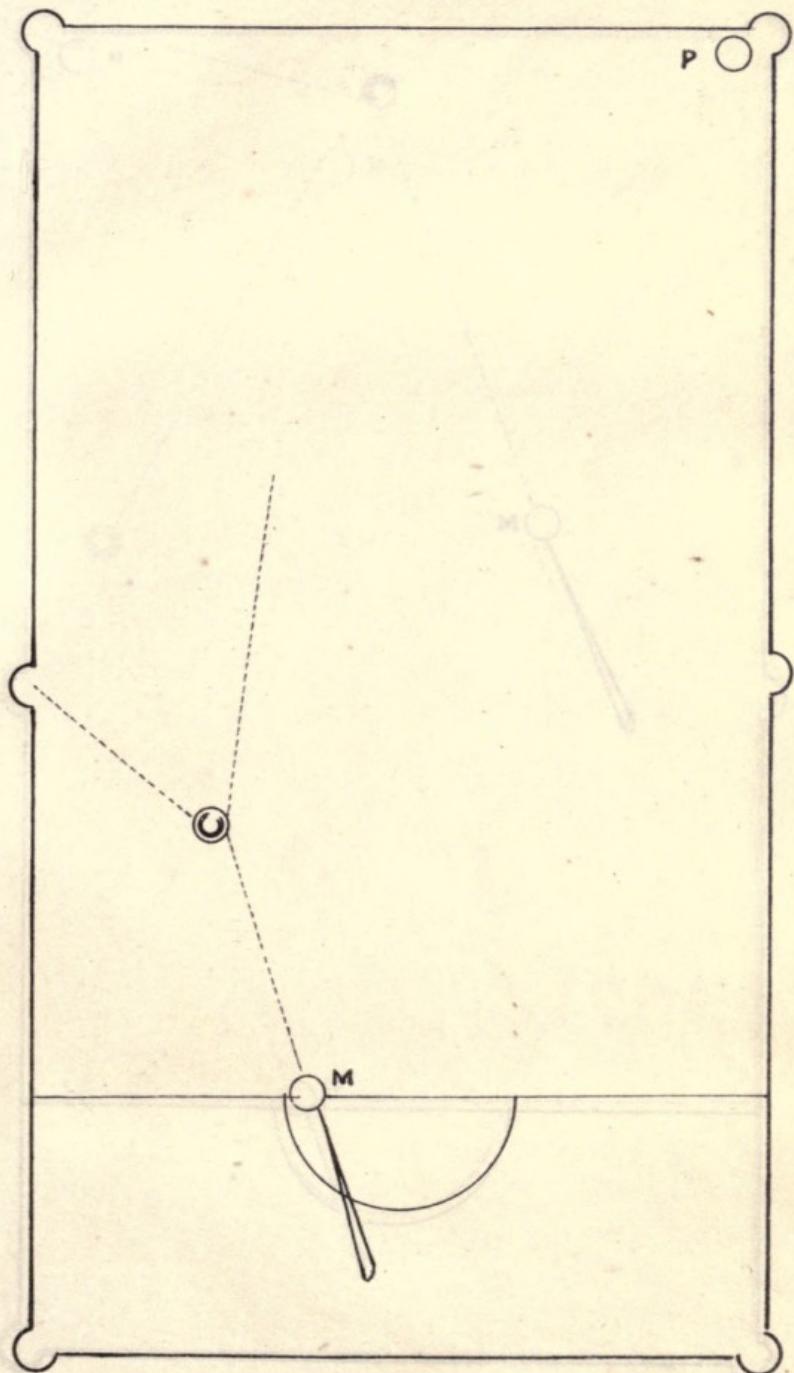
Mr. Mardon played from the rest upon the red ball, and made a canon.
Game, 485 to 496.

PLATE 5.



Mr. Mardon twisted into the corner pocket off the white ball.
Game, 487 to 496.

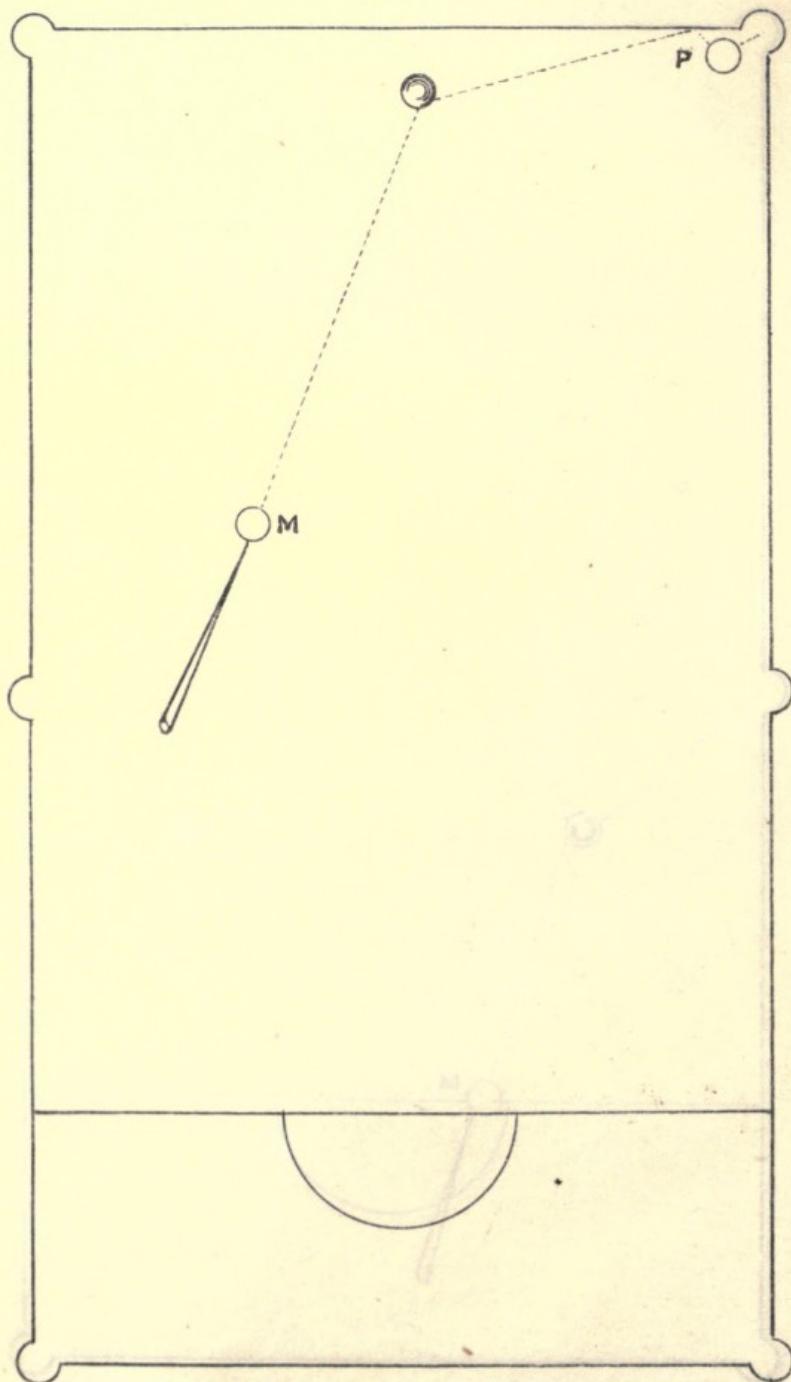
PLATE 6



Mr. Mardon holed the red ball in the centre pocket.

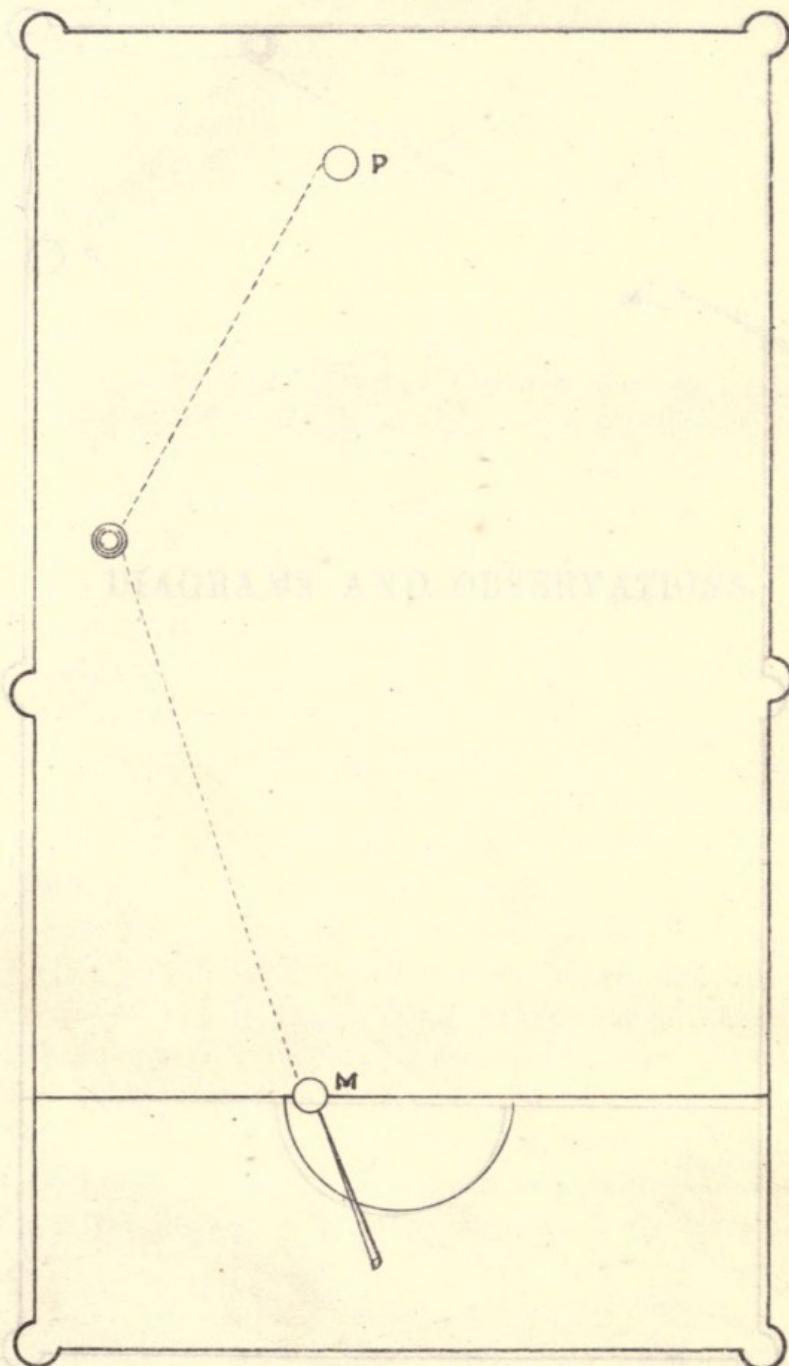
Game, 490 to 496.

PLATE 7.



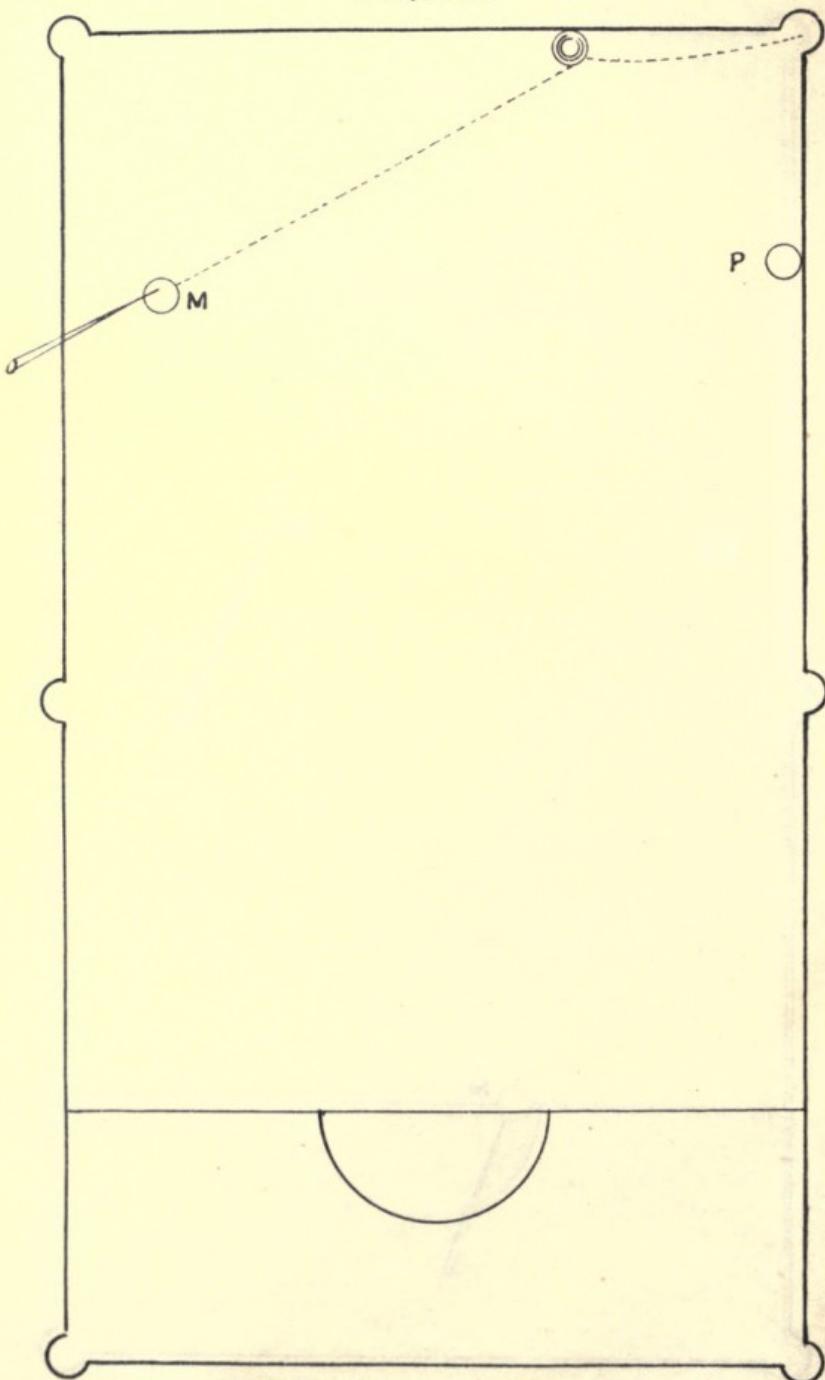
Mr. Mardon made a canon off the red ball; his ball went into the corner pocket; the two other balls kissed, and were left as in the next diagram.
Game, 495 to 496.

PLATE 8.



Mr. Mardon played for a canon, and made it.
Game, 497 to 496.

PLATE 9.



Mr. Mardon holed his ball in the corner pocket off the red with a strong side-twist, and won the game; making 25 points off the last break.

DIAGRAMS AND OBSERVATIONS.

As cushions stuffed with Indian-rubber vary in power, and as the angle formed from them is either greater or less according to the strength adopted, it may probably occur that the correctness of the angles marked out in the diagrams may be questioned by those who are accustomed to play on a slow Table, or who apply force in the delivery of the cue; but from the free and lively cushions upon the Table on which I have been in the habit of playing, the ball directed its course as described.

In the diagrams describing canons by the side stroke I have not deemed it necessary to mark by a curved line the course of the ball on its progress to the first cushion; but the losing hazard in Plate 14 will forcibly show the effect, for, as the ball not played upon masks the pocket, the hazard can only be accomplished by making the played-with ball form the curved line to which allusion is made.

When the diagrams were completed they were submitted to the inspection of a professional player of eminence and of sound judgment; he returned them with the following remark:—"I think the pupil cannot require further instruction." A gentleman, a sterling player, thus addressed me on the morning of the race for the Derby. "If, Mr. Mardon, you can enlighten me as much with reference to this race as you have done with respect to the game of Billiards, I should not have much difficulty in picking out the winner."

PLATE 10.

FIG. 4

LEFT SIDE STROKE

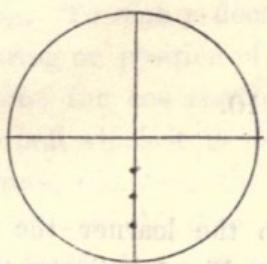


FIG. 3

RIGHT SIDE STROKE

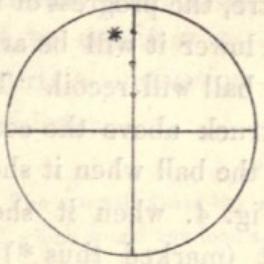


FIG. 2

TO FOLLOW

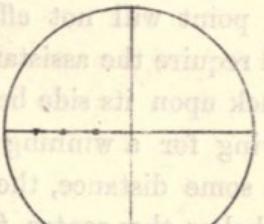
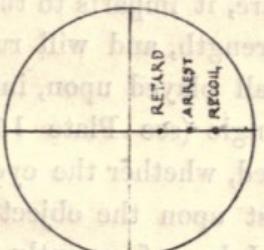


FIG. 1

RETARD
ARREST
RECOIL



TO RECOIL

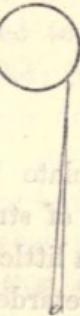
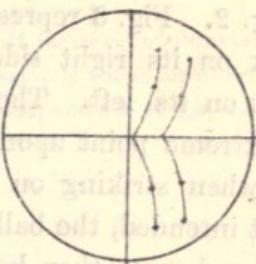


FIG. 5

TWIST COMBINING THE SIDE STROKE



TO FOLLOW

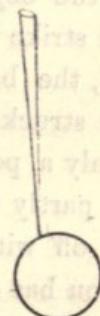


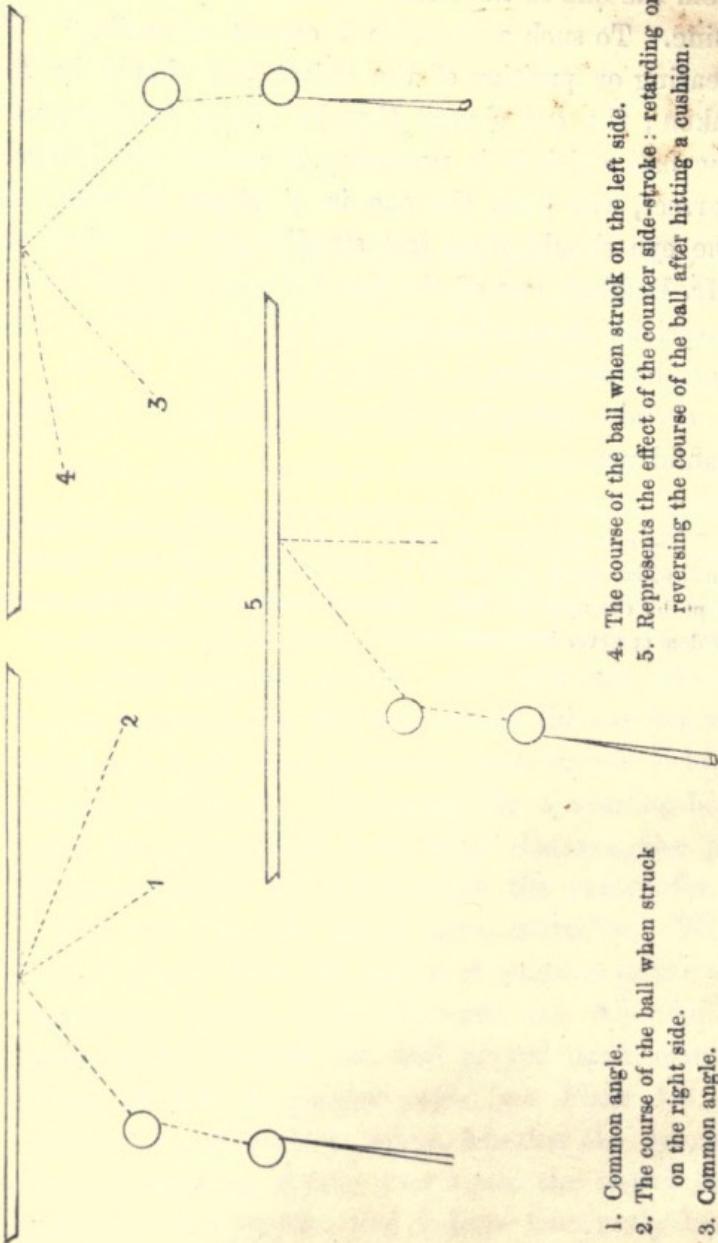
PLATE 10.

This plate will exhibit to the learner the proper methods of striking the ball. Fig. 1 indicates that, by hitting a little below the centre, the progress of his ball will be retarded; by striking lower it will be arrested; and by hitting lower still the ball will recoil. To walk or follow, the ball must be struck above the centre, as in Fig. 2. Fig. 3 represents the ball when it should be struck on its right side; Fig. 4. when it should be struck on its left. The dot (marked thus *) shows the extreme point upon which the ball can be struck; and, when striking on that point will not effect the object intended, the ball will require the assistance of a twist, and must then be struck upon its side below the centre (see Fig. 5). In playing for a winning hazard, when the object ball is at some distance, the player should strike his ball rather below the centre, for, thus struck, the ball will travel more correctly. When a ball is struck above the centre, it imparts to the object ball only a portion of its strength, and will run, as it were, partly through the ball played upon, instead of going off with a greater angle (see Plate 15). The question has often been asked, whether the eye, at the time of striking, should rest upon the object ball or upon the one struck; and I have frequently heard a popular professor declare that the eye passed so quickly

from the one to the other that it was difficult to determine. To such a doctrine I cannot subscribe.* The bearing or position of the object ball should be first taken; the cue should then be placed to that part of the ball which it is necessary to strike; the bridge, if correct, will keep the cue in a proper direction, and the eye should then rest steadily on the object ball. Mr. Bedford, one of the finest winning-hazard strikers, invariably directs his attention to the ball played upon; and he considers a deviation from that course to be a certain indication of nervous feeling or of want of confidence.

* The eye will direct the hand. If in the act of throwing a stone at a bird, which would you look at? Certainly not at the stone. If a bowler kept his eye upon the ball in his hand, and not on the stumps, he would seldom or never hit the wicket.

THE SIDE STROKE.



1. Common angle.
2. The course of the ball when struck on the right side.
3. Common angle.

4. The course of the ball when struck on the left side.
5. Represents the effect of the counter side-stroke : retarding or reversing the course of the ball after hitting a cushion.

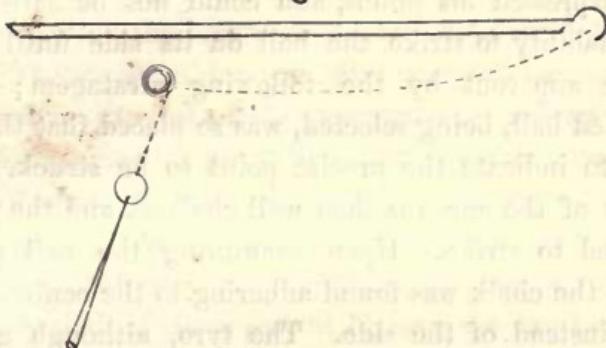


PLATE 11.

The side stroke is an agent powerful and commanding—regulating strengths, assisting defence, and accomplishing by gentle play more than can be achieved by force. So varied and, in fact, so important are its applications that, without its use, a player can neither enter fully into the enjoyment of the game nor expect to shine. Nevertheless, however wonderful its operations may appear, an explanation of five minutes, accompanied by a little instruction, is all that is required to make even a novice fully acquainted with its properties, the art of hitting the ball played with on its side presenting the sole difficulty to be overcome; that once surmounted, practice will soon enable the player to turn it to the best account. Many players aim at the side of the ball, but, in the delivery of the cue, strike it in the centre. Often, when the failure of the stroke has been justly attributed to such a cause, the player

has expressed his doubt, and could not be satisfied of his inability to strike the ball on its side until it was made apparent by the following stratagem:—The marked ball, being selected, was so placed that the spot was to indicate the precise point to be struck. The point of the cue was then well chalked, and the player desired to strike. Upon examining the ball played with, the chalk was found adhering to the centre of the ball instead of the side. The tyro, although greatly surprised, was at last convinced. As a preliminary measure, the following remarks will throw some light upon the subject. The ball must be struck on the side it is intended to go: if it is the wish of the player that the ball should deviate from its natural course, and incline to the right, it must be hit on the right side; if to the left, the left side must be struck. There are several parts of the side of the ball that can be struck: some strokes require one part to be hit, some another; but all have greater effect when the ball is gently struck. The use of the counter side-stroke (see Fig. 5) is of the greatest importance, since it frequently occurs that the ball played with, to insure another score, should return from the cushion nearly straight, instead of glancing off at a right angle. By adopting this skilful method of play, a favourable position can always be obtained. The amateur has, doubtless, ere this imbibed a sufficient insight into the scientific part of the game to feel fully aware that the ball played with can be brought under the strictest control; that it can be retarded, arrested, or made to recoil at the will of the player; and, consequently, he must at once perceive, possessing this command over the ball, that it

can be so placed that each canon or hazard can be brought within the compass of even indifferent execution. The situation, too, of the object ball can also be arranged by the use of the side stroke. For instance, the losing hazard marked 6 represents one from the red ball when on the spot; the generality of players, from such an angle, make the hazard with a strength that carries the red ball into the baulk and out again; but, if the ball of the opponent be near the baulk circle, it is possible that a kiss may place both balls in the baulk. An occurrence of this kind happened, when the player was 18, his opponent 23; and, as he missed in playing back, he lost a game that he ought to have won. Had the player struck his ball upon the right side, he could have made the hazard without taking the red ball below the centre pocket. The advantage to be derived from such a mode of play will be manifest to any one at all advanced in the game. If a canon or hazard forms an easy, plain angle, it can be accomplished by striking the ball in the centre, and merely with that strength sufficient to reach the desired object; but if the contemplated score is out of the common angle, the side stroke, a substitute for strength, will effect it. The ball, when struck in the centre, on leaving the object ball, directs its course truly; if struck upon its side, it will forsake the direct course, and incline either to the right or left, in accordance with the side that has been struck. The selection of the method to be adopted in making the hazard should be determined by the position or place destined for the object ball to occupy; if desirable that it should be but gently moved, the use of the side stroke will render force unnecessary. Ere this

nicety of play, having judgment for its basis, can be carried into operation, it will be necessary for the player to be capable of judging correctly respecting the nature of the angle presented ; for, should the apparent score not require the assistance of the side stroke, its application would, of course, frustrate the intention. Remarks similar to these will be easily understood by those conversant with the game, but it is difficult, in writing, to bring the extraordinary merits of the side stroke within the comprehension of learners ; still, if that class of players would devote a few hours to instruction, and seek it from any professor qualified to teach, they would perceive the simplicity of its action, and be enabled to embrace the advantages produced.

PLATE 12
PLAYING BACK
B

PLATE 12.

PLAYING BACK.

Moving bodies observe certain laws in respect to the direction they pursue in rebounding from any impediment with which they come in contact. In the annexed diagram, the letter B is supposed to be the centre of the cushion ; A is the ball which, being hit towards the cushion in the direction of B, is reflected in the direction of C. It is demonstrated that a perfect ball, striking a smooth surface, makes the same angle in leaving the point where it strikes that it does in approaching it ; and, whatever be the angle at which the ball strikes the cushion, the same rule will be observed to be followed. Thus, if the ball be struck straightly from D to B, it will rebound and return to D ; if sent from E to B, it will be reflected to F. The angle which a ball makes with the perpendicular line, in traversing from E to B, is called the angle of incidence ; and the angle which it makes in rebounding from B to F is called the angle of reflection. Such angles are always equal. By a knowledge of these laws, a player, having to play back, can at all times disturb a ball placed in the baulk ; and, to ascertain the exact part of the cushion to be struck, he has only to draw an imaginary perpendicular line from the ball to

be played with and from the ball to be moved, and, if parallel, the centre of the space between the supposed lines will be the precise spot. There are few parts of the game more essential than that of being enabled to disturb a baulk. In this many excel; and it has always been my lot to play against those who seldom or never missed. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that I have lost many and many a game when the balls have been thus situated, and my score advanced to 23. Let me, therefore, call attention to the very great utility of the measure. It is an art that is easily acquired, requiring only practice and a little instruction; but let me again reiterate that all the instruction in the world will avail nothing unless, if from an Indian-rubber cushion, due attention be given to proper strength.

Diagram illustrating the method of playing the baulk. The lines marked 1 is the only and last stroke made by the player. No. 2 represents a stroke made by a Frenchman in the Island Racine on Corn Street. He placed a ball on the red ball, and made the move just described without touching it.



PLATE 13.

FIG 2



FIG 1.

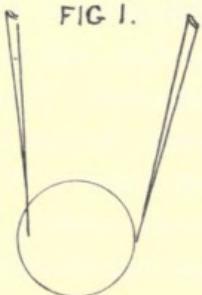


FIG 3

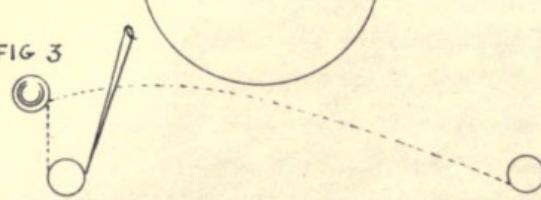
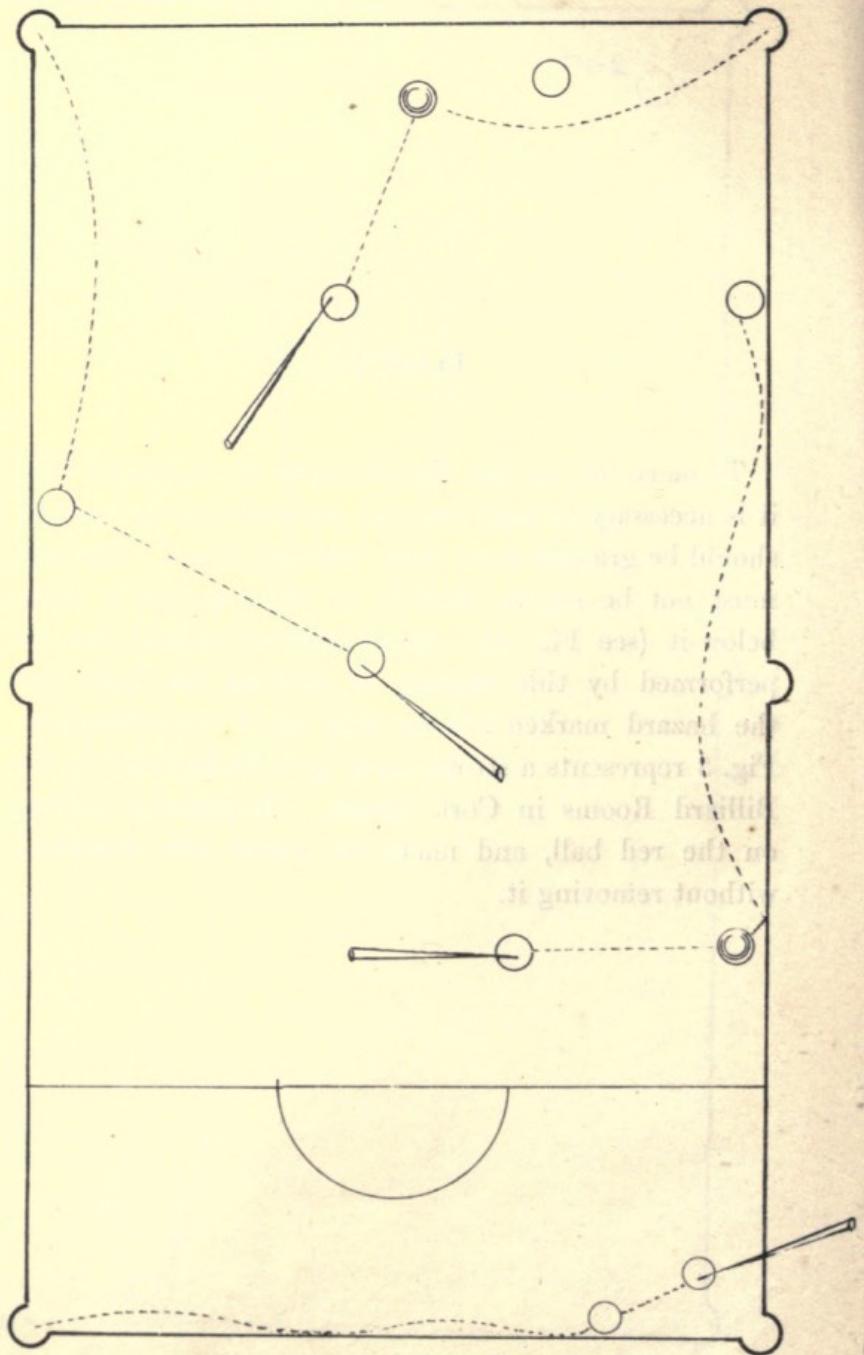


PLATE 13.

To mace (or, as the French term it, *masser*) a ball, it is necessary to hold the cue perpendicularly, and it should be grasped more than half-way down. The ball must not be struck directly on the top, but a little below it (see Fig. 1). Many curious strokes can be performed by this manner of striking the ball; but the hazard marked 2 is the only one I ever attempted. Fig. 3 represents a stroke made by a Frenchman in the Billiard Rooms in Cork Street. He placed a shilling on the red ball, and made the canon now described without removing it.

PLATE 14.



in this case, it will be necessary to play the ball so as to give it a curve, or bend it to one side, so that the ball may fall into the pocket. This however, requires much skill, and it is better to have a small ball, if possible, than a large one, as it is easier to strike the ball, and cause it to follow the curved line, or course of the ball, when struck much above the centre.

PLATE 14.

The losing hazards and canon now described are for the purpose of showing the curved line, or course of the ball, when struck much above the centre. In playing for losing hazards from similar angles, it is always better to strike the ball high, if strength be used; for the curve which is thus given to the progress of the ball causes the entire opening of the pocket to be exposed; whereas, if the hazard was attempted without striking the ball above the centre, only a portion of the pocket would be available.

Play the centre of the table, as shown in Plate 14. The ball has been struck on the left side above the centre, and is playing, therefore, far enough from the cushion to allow the radius of the side pocket, to make it necessary to be very particular with respect to the direction of the ball to be struck; for, if the player would strike the ball in the centre of the hazard, in the delivery of the ball, it would fall below the centre, the direction of which the ball would be wholly incorrect, and the hazard would not be struck.

PLATE 15.

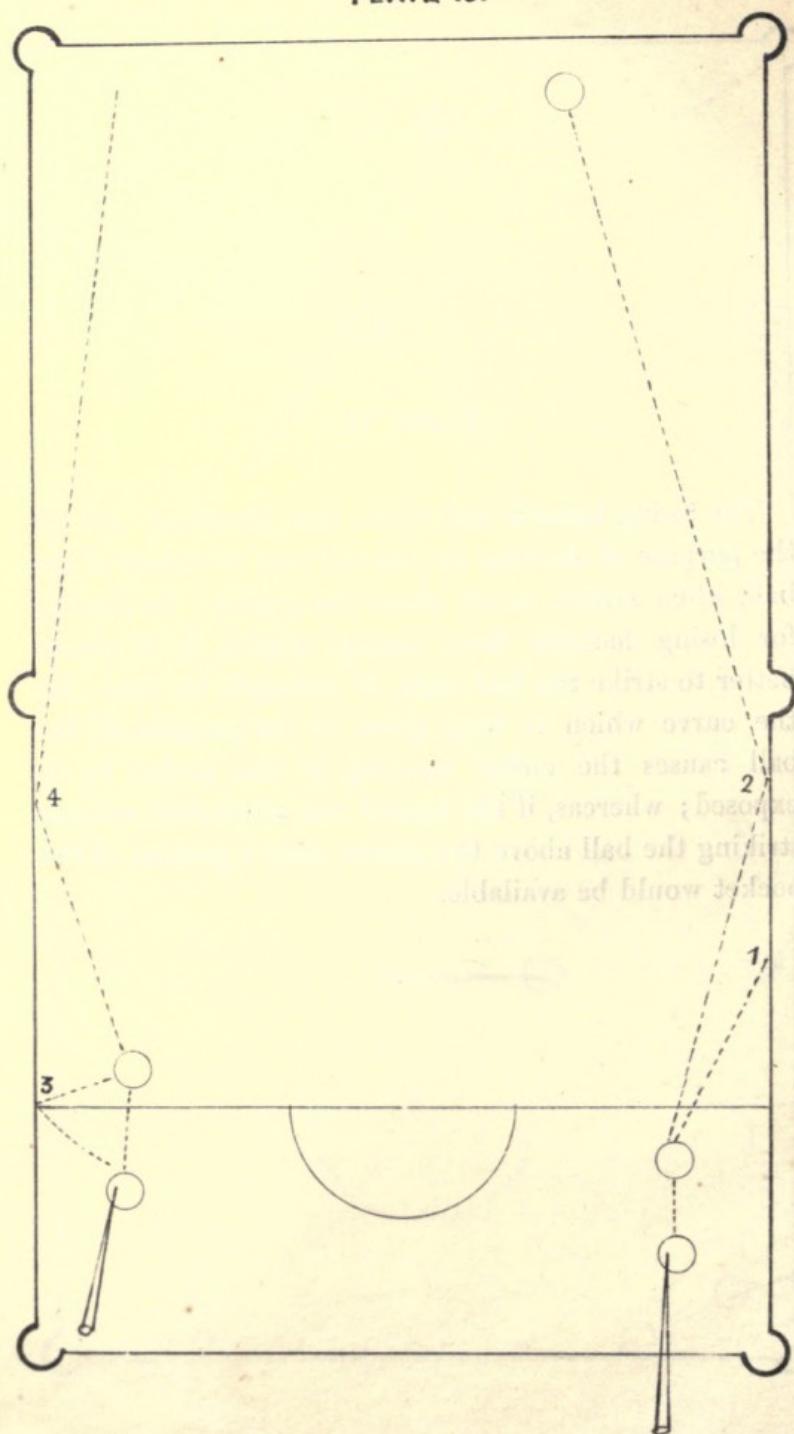


PLATE 15.

On balls as small as those represented in the diagrams it is difficult to mark the precise spot on which the ball should be struck. The learner, therefore, should endeavour to bear in mind that the side stroke, if applied below the centre, will cause the ball to twist ere it reaches the cushion ; and that the side stroke above the centre will induce the played-with ball to pass obliquely through the ball played upon, and by that means, the resistance being less, reach a situation on the cushion beyond what could be obtained by striking the ball in the centre ; and, consequently, a canon, by such a mode of play, can be accomplished by considerably reducing the angle. The diagram annexed may, probably, afford a better explanation. Fig. 1 shows the angle when the ball has been struck in the centre ; Fig. 2 represents it when it has been struck above the centre and on the left side. It must be apparent that a canon can be effected with more ease and with less side-stroke from Fig. 2 than from Fig. 1. Fig. 3 shows the course of the ball when it has been struck on the left side rather below the centre ; and Fig. 4 points to the effect when it has been struck on the left side above the centre. In playing, therefore, for canons from the cushions, through the medium of the side stroke, it will be necessary to be very particular with respect to the part of the ball to be struck ; for, if the player aimed above the centre of the ball and, in the delivery of the cue, struck it below the centre, the direction or course of the ball would be widely different, and the contemplated score frustrated.

PLATE 16.

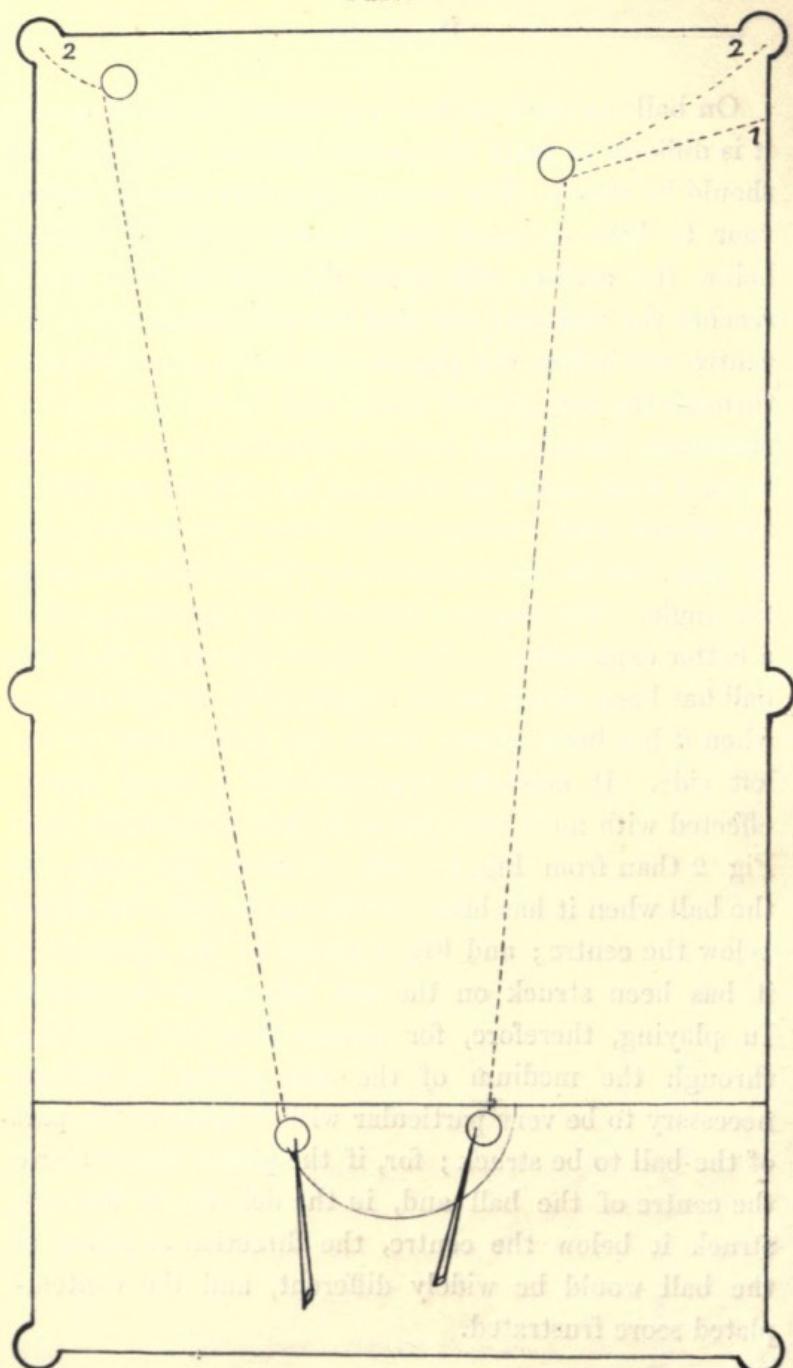


PLATE 16.

The losing hazards now described are of the greatest importance; and but few players, except those who excel, are capable of performing them to any certainty. In playing the hazard for the right-hand corner pocket, the played-with ball, if struck in the centre, would form a natural angle, and strike the cushion at Fig. 1; but by striking low, to the left of the centre, and grasping the cue tightly, the ball will deviate from its direct course, and form a curved line to Fig. 2. I have seen these hazards made with the greatest precision by a Noble Earl.

PLATE 17
IMPORTANT LOSING HAZARDS FOR PRACTICE

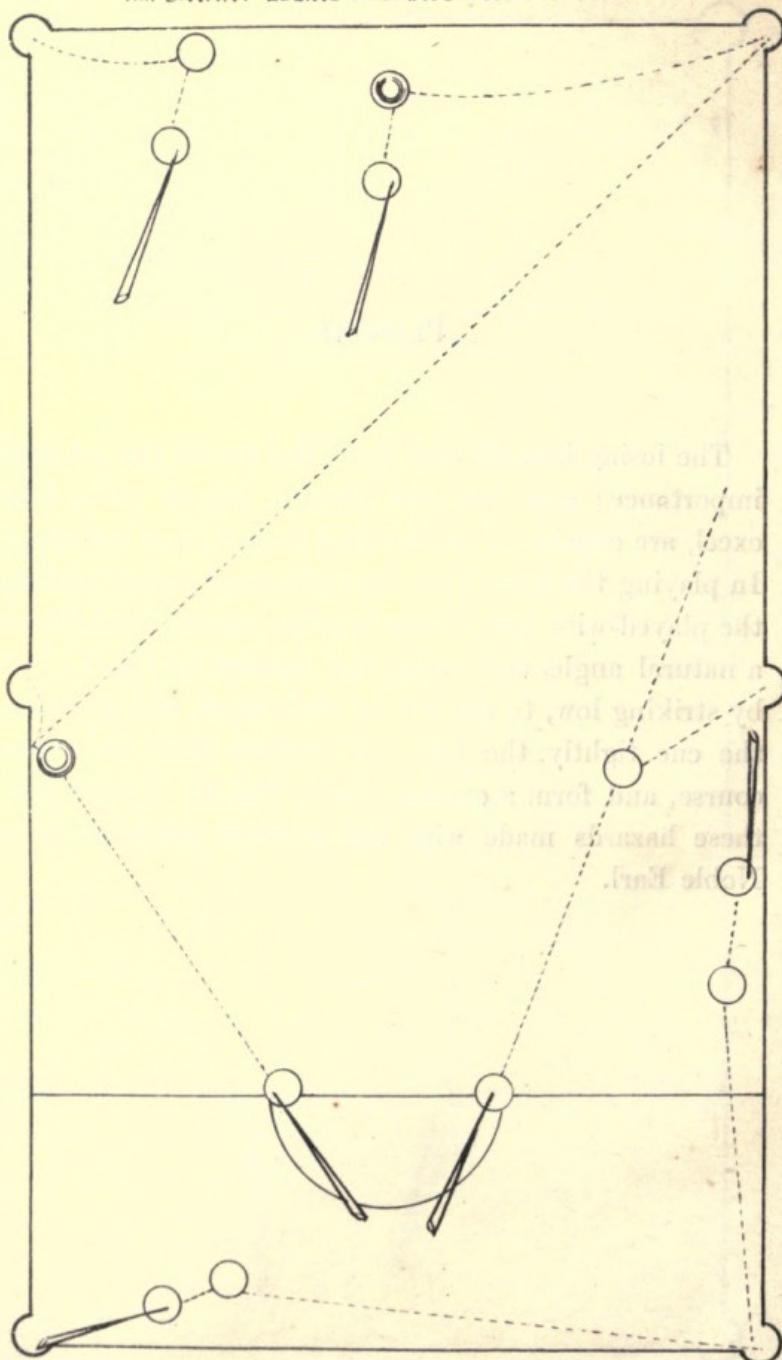


PLATE 17.

IMPORTANT LOSING HAZARDS FOR PRACTICE.

The losing hazards now displayed should be frequently practised. The one from the ball in the baulk circle to the right-hand centre pocket is of great importance if playing upon the white ball, since it is better that the ball of the opponent should not be removed from the Table. The hazard is more difficult than it appears. I saw an excellent professional player miss it twelve times in succession. The ball near the left-hand centre pocket is supposed to touch the cushion. A sporting Baronet betted, from balls thus placed, a sovereign a time that he scored. He accomplished it, either by doubling the object ball into the corner pocket or by holing the played-with ball in the middle one! The twisting hazard for the left-hand corner pocket should be learned. A gentleman to whom I gave eight points in 24 (a pupil of Mr. Pratt) made it six times in succession. The generality of players strike the played-with ball on the left, but the right side is the correct method. If the ball be struck on the left, and it should touch the cushion ere it reaches the pocket, it will depart from it; but should it touch the cushion when struck on the right side, it will hug or cling to it, and evince the strongest desire to enter the pocket. The losing hazard from the red ball on the spot is exhibited for the purpose of again showing that the played-with ball can be made to reach the corner pocket without taking the ball played upon below the centre of the Table. Should the object ball be required to return to the top cushion, the player may strike his ball either in the centre or on the left side.

PLATE 18
IMPORTANT WINNING HAZARDS FOR PRACTICE

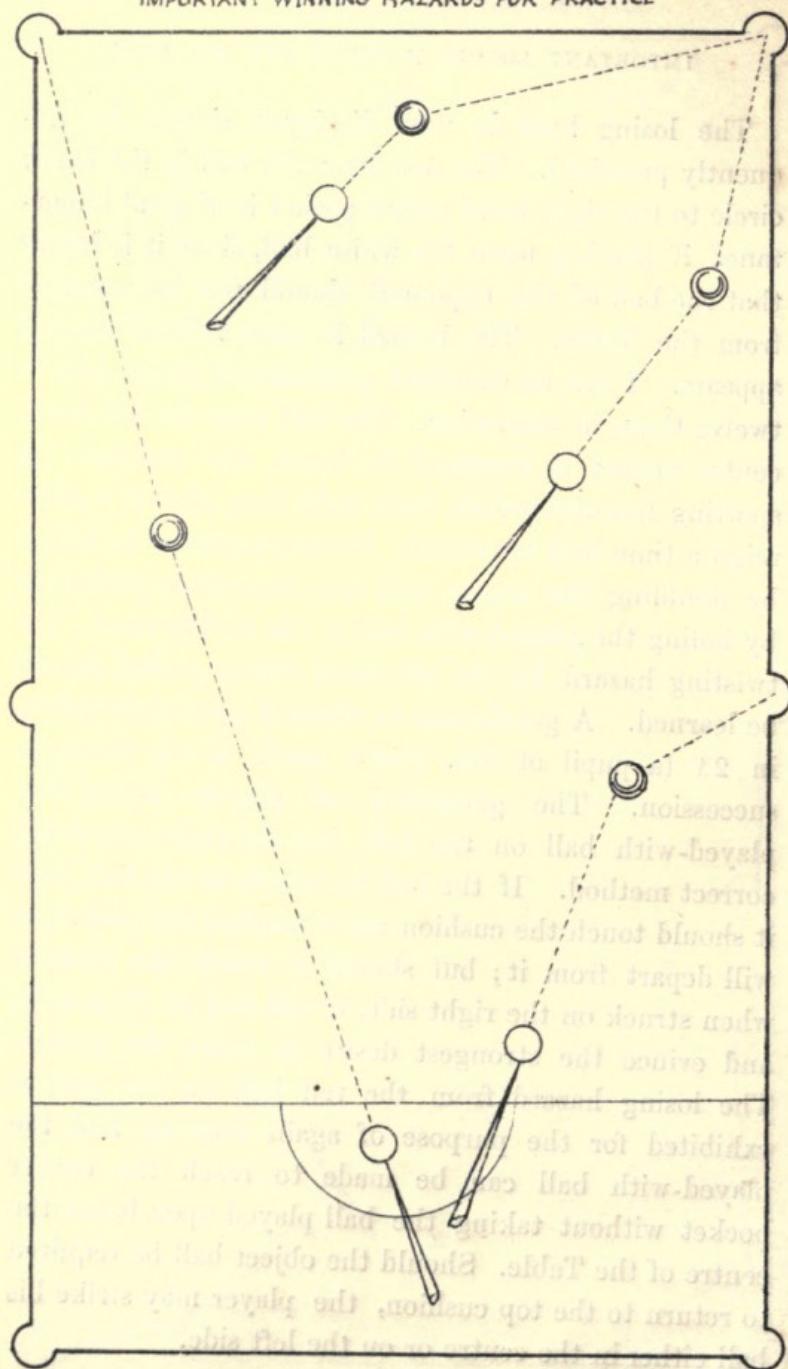


PLATE 18.

IMPORTANT WINNING HAZARDS FOR PRACTICE.

The winning hazard to the left-hand corner pocket has been practised night after night by Mr. Kentfield, Mr. George Howse, and Mr. John Pook. A sweepstakes was made, the player holing the ball most frequently in ten strokes to be pronounced the winner. Mr. Howse was, I believe, the most successful. The hazard upon the Subscription Table in Manchester Street was so difficult that Mr. Kentfield would only back himself to make it three times in ten attempts. Amateurs desirous of becoming good winning-hazard players should practise the stroke upon a Table with small pockets. I have called these hazards important, because they will, if properly executed, command another score when the red ball be re-spotted.

PLATE 10

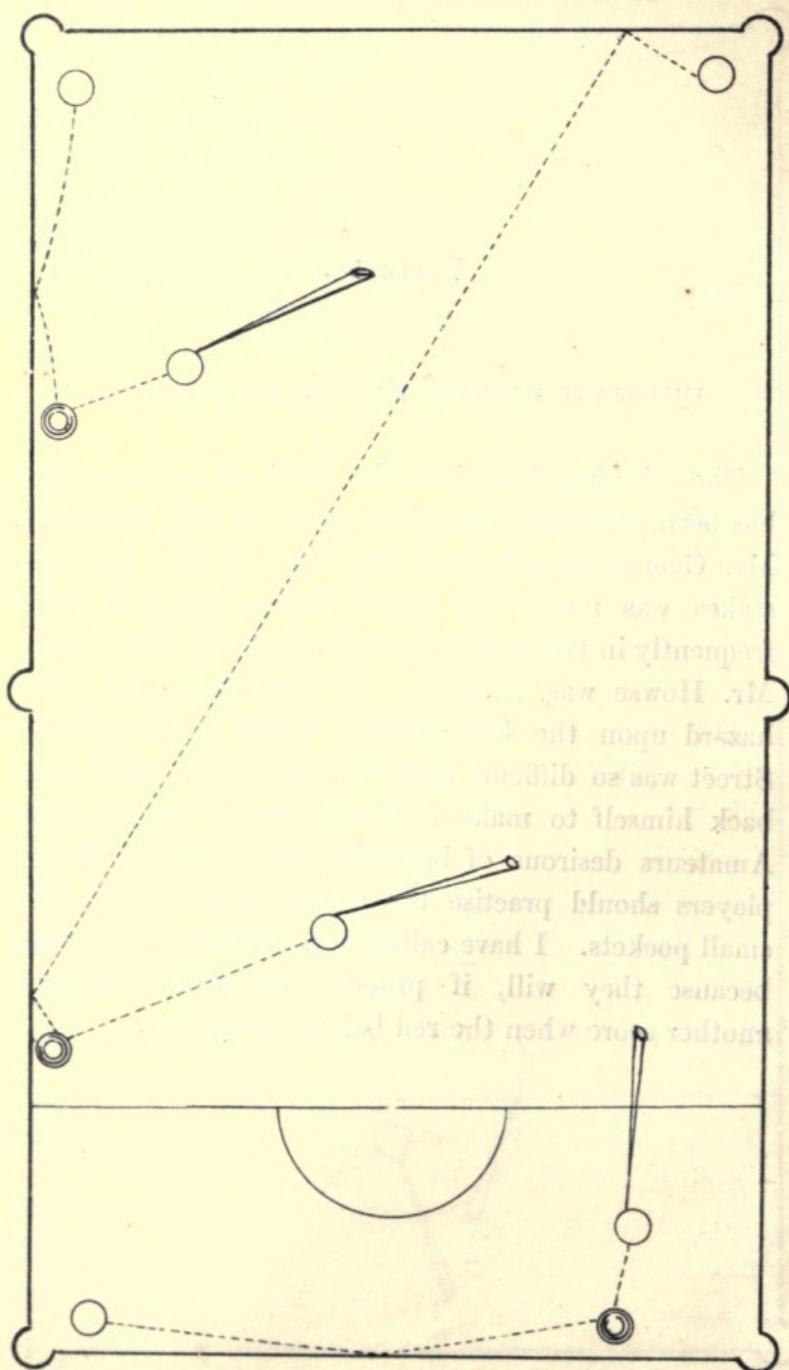


PLATE 19.

I have endeavoured to impress upon the minds of young players that the side stroke is a substitute for strength; and the canons displayed in this diagram will be, I hope, sufficiently explanatory, as they may be effected with gentle strength.

PLATE 20

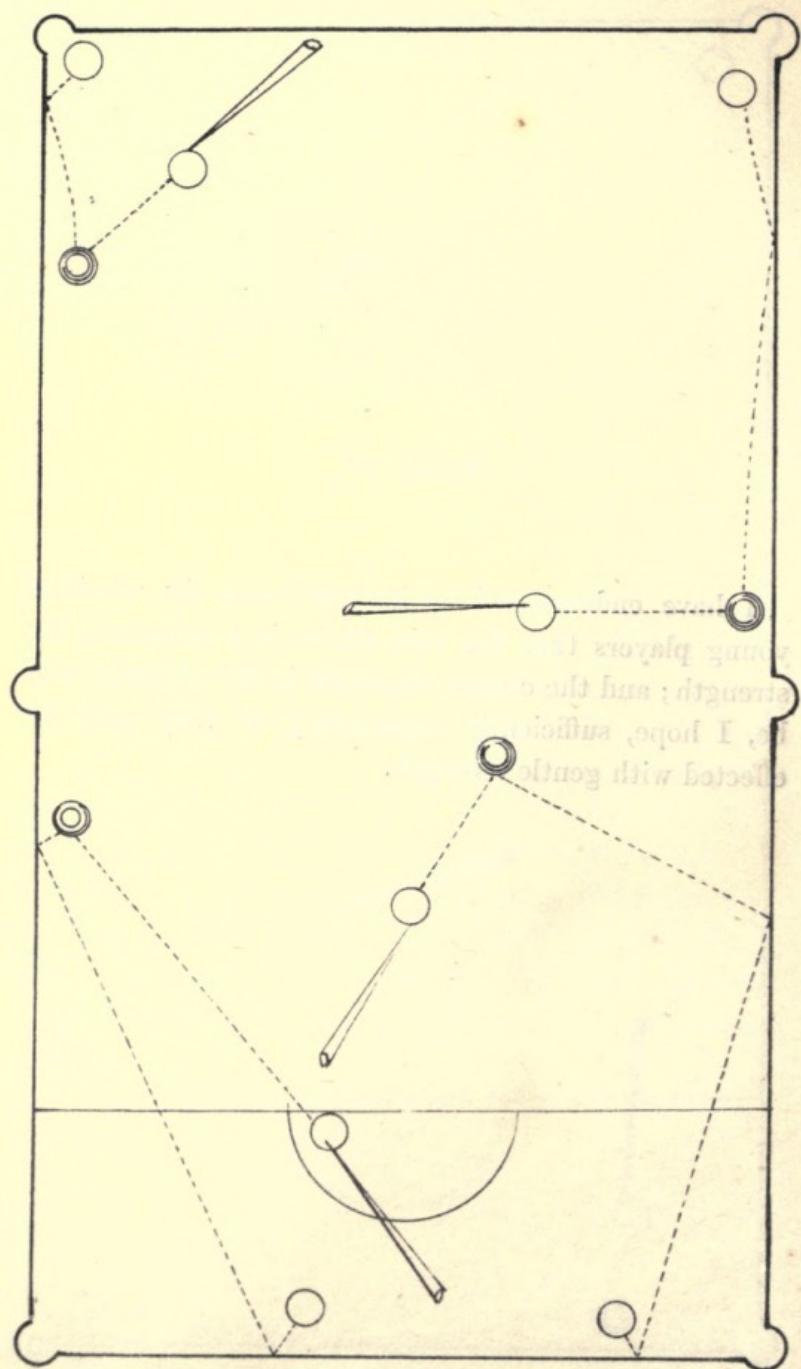


PLATE 20.

I have stated in another page that certain strokes require that the cue should be forced or pressed into the played-with ball; and the present diagram will afford, I hope, a sufficient illustration. If the cue was held in the usual way, rather loosely, the canons could scarcely be made in the manner described; but, by grasping it tightly and pressing it well into the ball, the extraordinary angles now displayed can be accomplished.

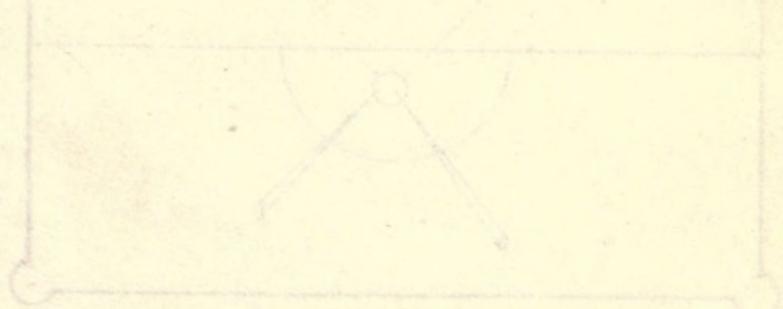


PLATE 21

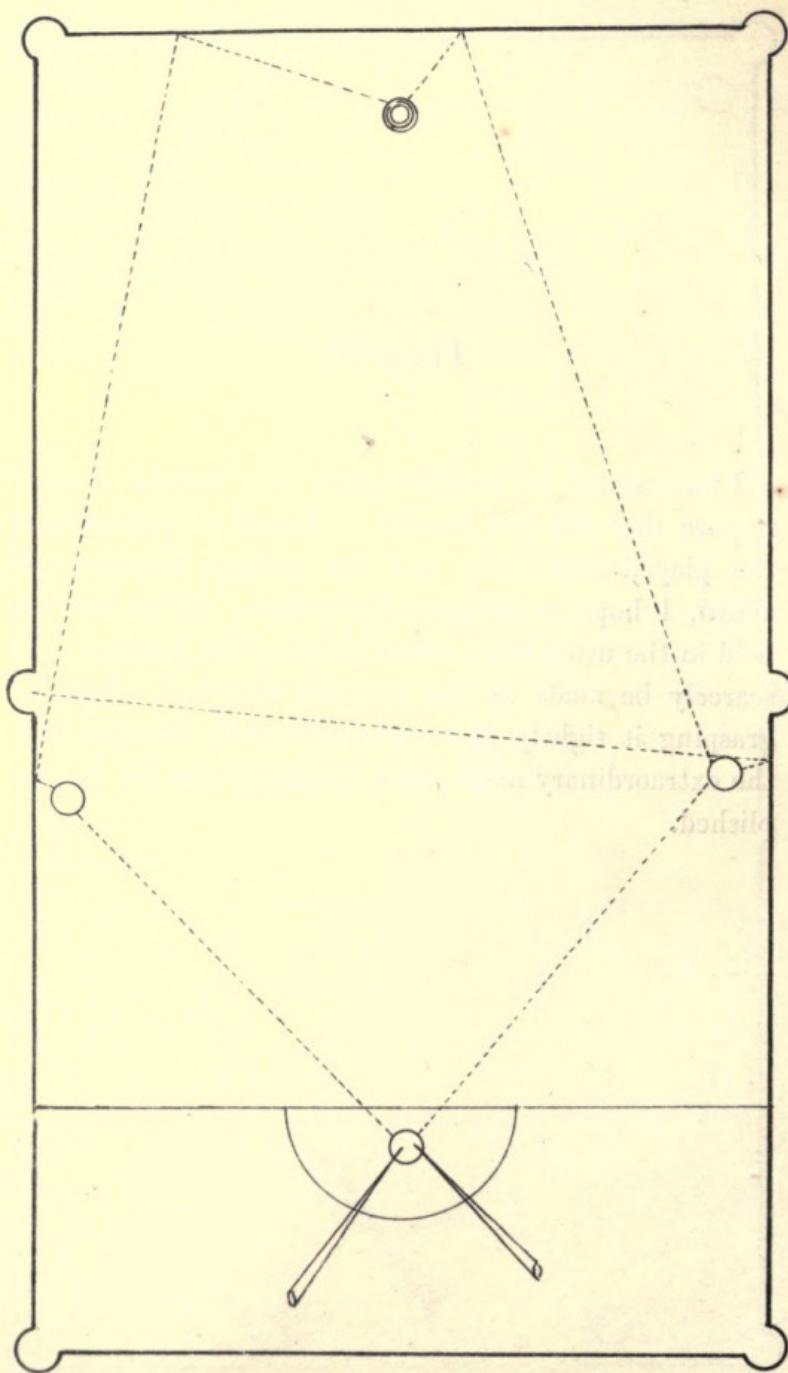


PLATE 21.

The advantage to be derived from placing the ball in the circle when giving a miss at starting has already been explained. That position being obtained, the opponent will, most probably, give another; and he will generally place his ball in situations similar to those near the centre pockets. The one to the right will leave the chances of either a double or a canon; and it is only an even bet against making the one or the other. When the ball is placed as closely to the cushion as described in the one to the left, I play for a canon by walking through the ball, making it from the top cushion through the agency of the side stroke. I have won scores of important games by this canon, and it is one well worth particular notice.

PLATE 22

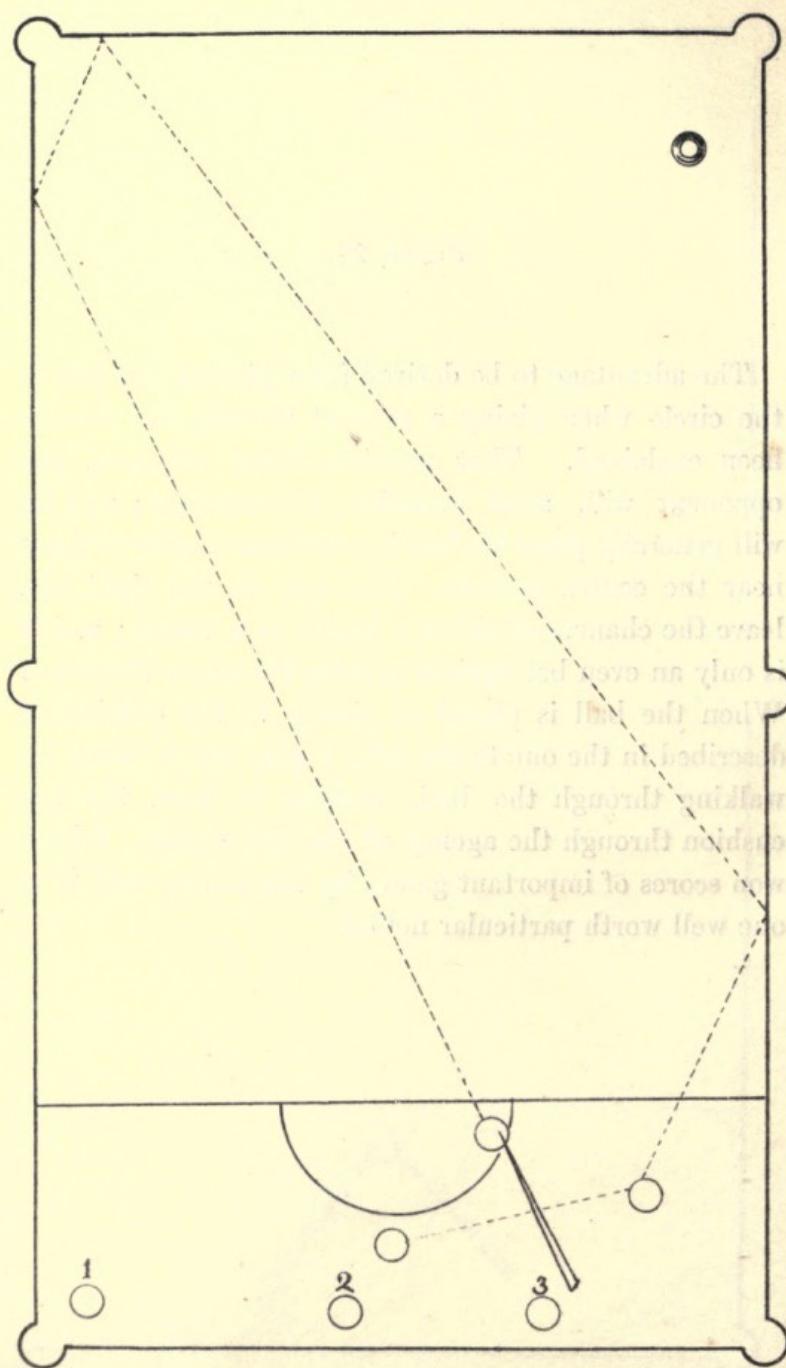


PLATE 22.

I have, in another page, recommended young players to commence with, and to practise, the making of winning hazards; and have stated that the other parts of the game will then become simple. The winning hazard now described for the right-hand corner pocket, and the following remarks of Mr. Kentfield associated therewith, will show most forcibly the difficulty of making long winning hazards upon a Table with very small pockets. Mr. Kentfield, calling my attention to the uncertainty of making such a hazard, took up the balls, and, placing them in the baulk as they are represented, said it was even easier to canon by the method now shown than to pocket the red ball. If balls were situated at Figures 1, 2, or 3, a canon may also be accomplished by the same method of play.

PLATE 23

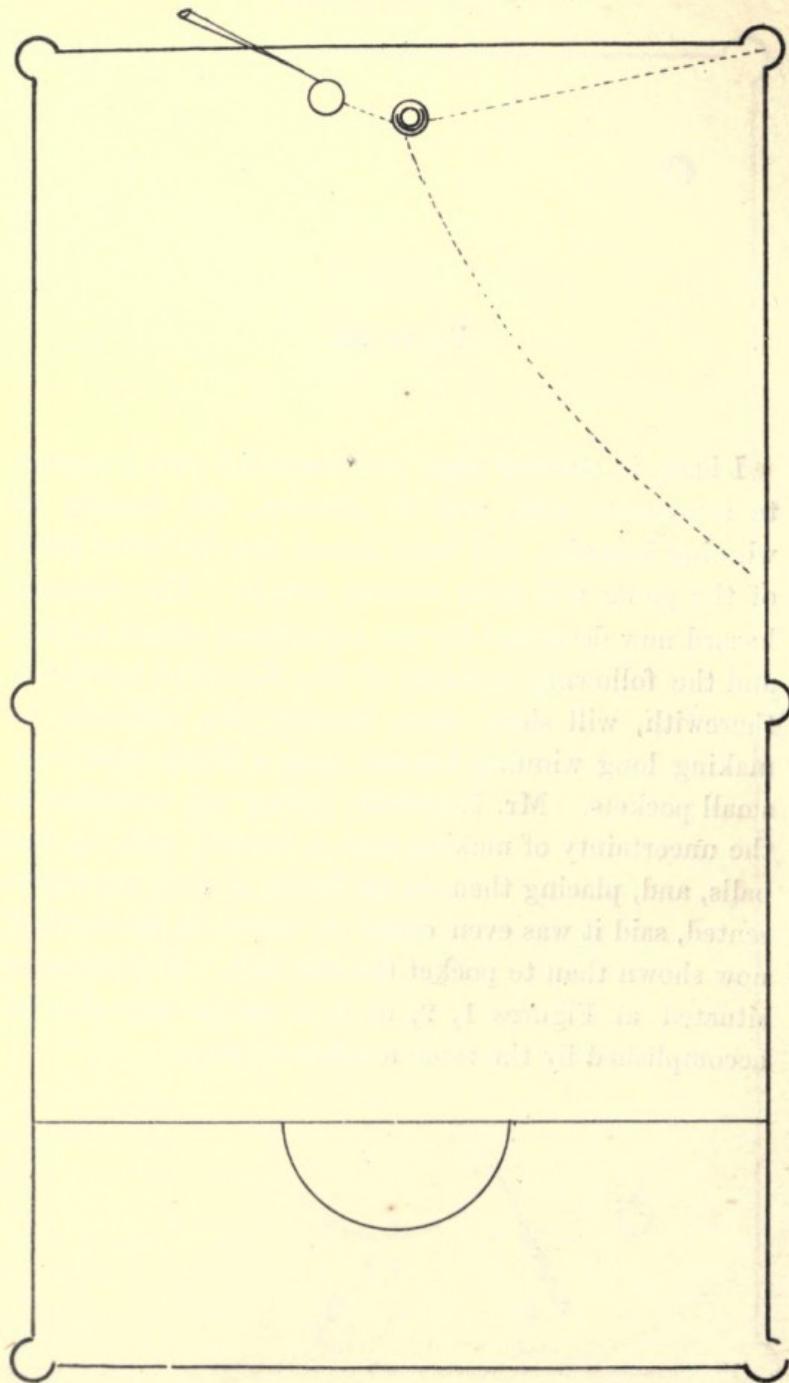


PLATE 23.

This diagram is exhibited for the purpose of showing the effect of, and the advantages to be derived from, the use of the counter side-stroke. If the hazard for the corner pocket was attempted by striking the played-with ball in the centre, it would travel below the middle pocket, and no other certain hazard would be left; but by striking the played-with ball on the left side it deviates from its natural or direct course, and, by inclining to the left, takes a position that will command a losing hazard from the red ball when re-spotted. Strokes similar to the one now described should be practised: they occur frequently, and long runs and excellence of play depend solely upon placing the ball in a situation that will command another score. Mr. Kentfield, a short time since, scored by such means forty or fifty points from the balls: a gentleman, by way of a joke thus addressed him—"Why, Kentfield, you have not made a hazard or canon but what even I could have made." "No," replied Mr. Kentfield, "and those who really understand the game will never leave anything more difficult to play for." Such words, from so great an authority, confirm all that I have said with reference to the game.

PLATE 24

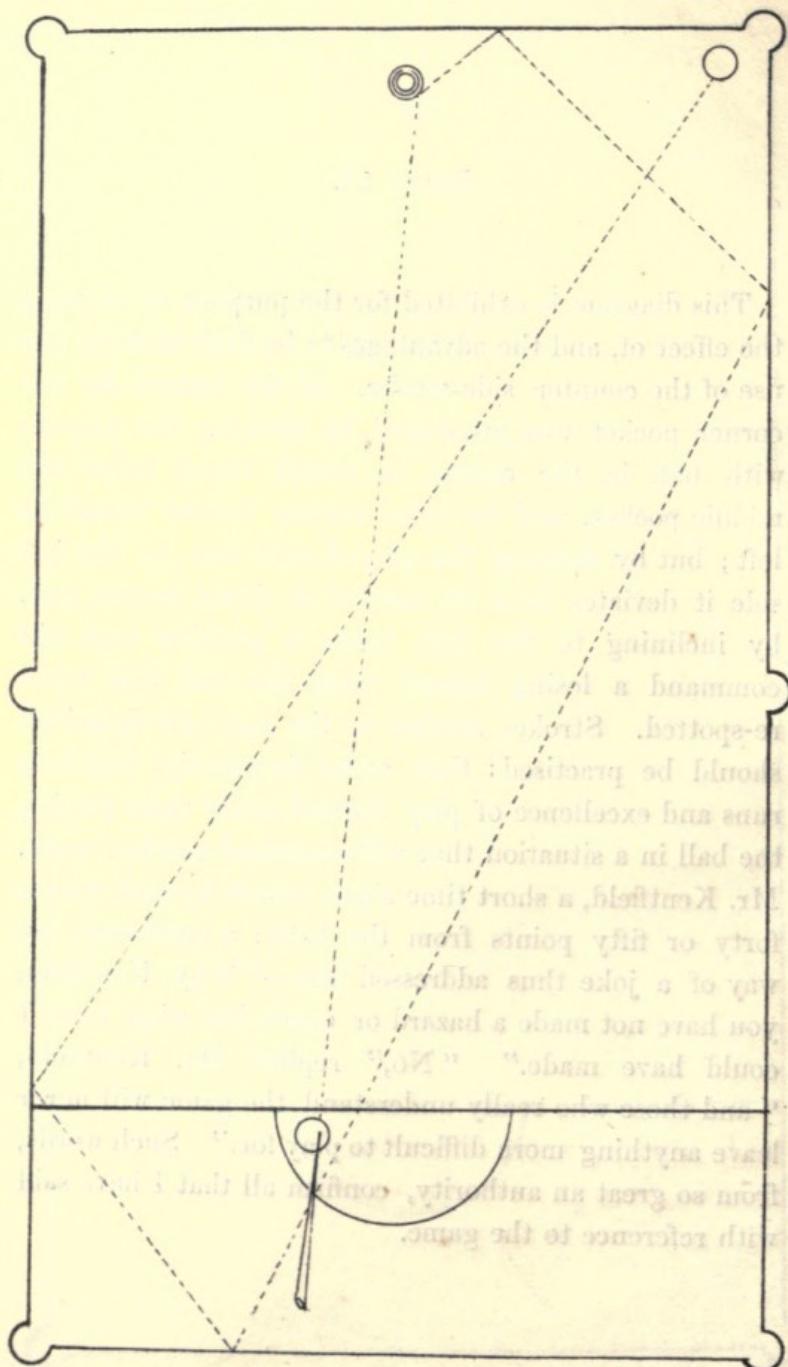


PLATE 24.

Balls are frequently placed as represented ; and ninety-nine players out of a hundred invariably attempt to canon through the medium of a twist. The stroke, thus executed, would require strength ; and the use of force renders the correct delivery of the cue uncertain. When the stroke by the twist has failed, I have generally seen a canon or hazard remaining for the opponent ; but by the method described the ball will, nine times out of ten, be quite safe.

PLATE 25

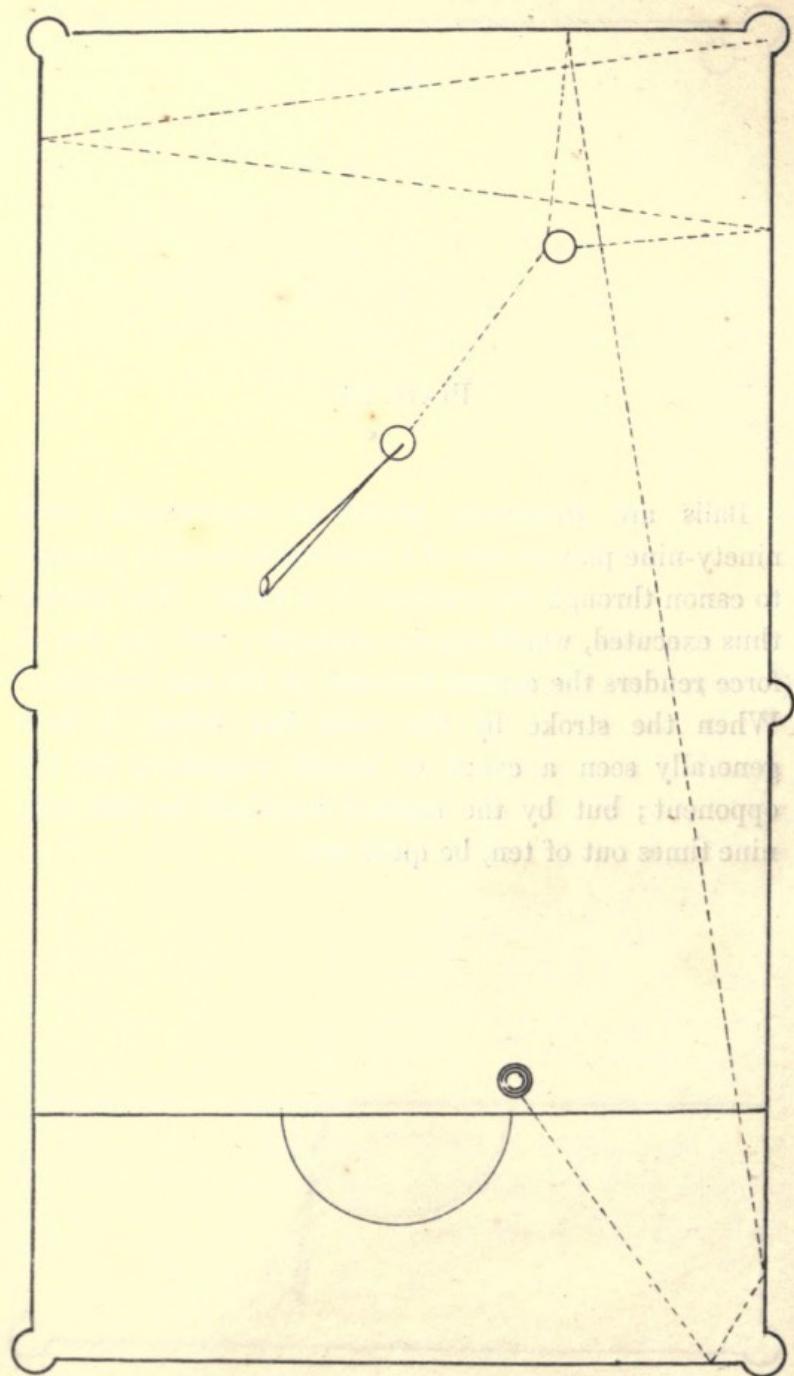


PLATE 25.

It frequently occurs, when the game is drawing to a close, that it is better to attempt a score of greater difficulty, provided it holds out a prospect of security. I wanted but two points when the balls were placed as they are now represented. My winning-hazard striking being imperfect, I dared not attempt to play my opponent's ball direct for the pocket, although, to many, a simple winning hazard. I played to double the ball and canon, after the manner described, and succeeded in accomplishing both.

PLATE 26

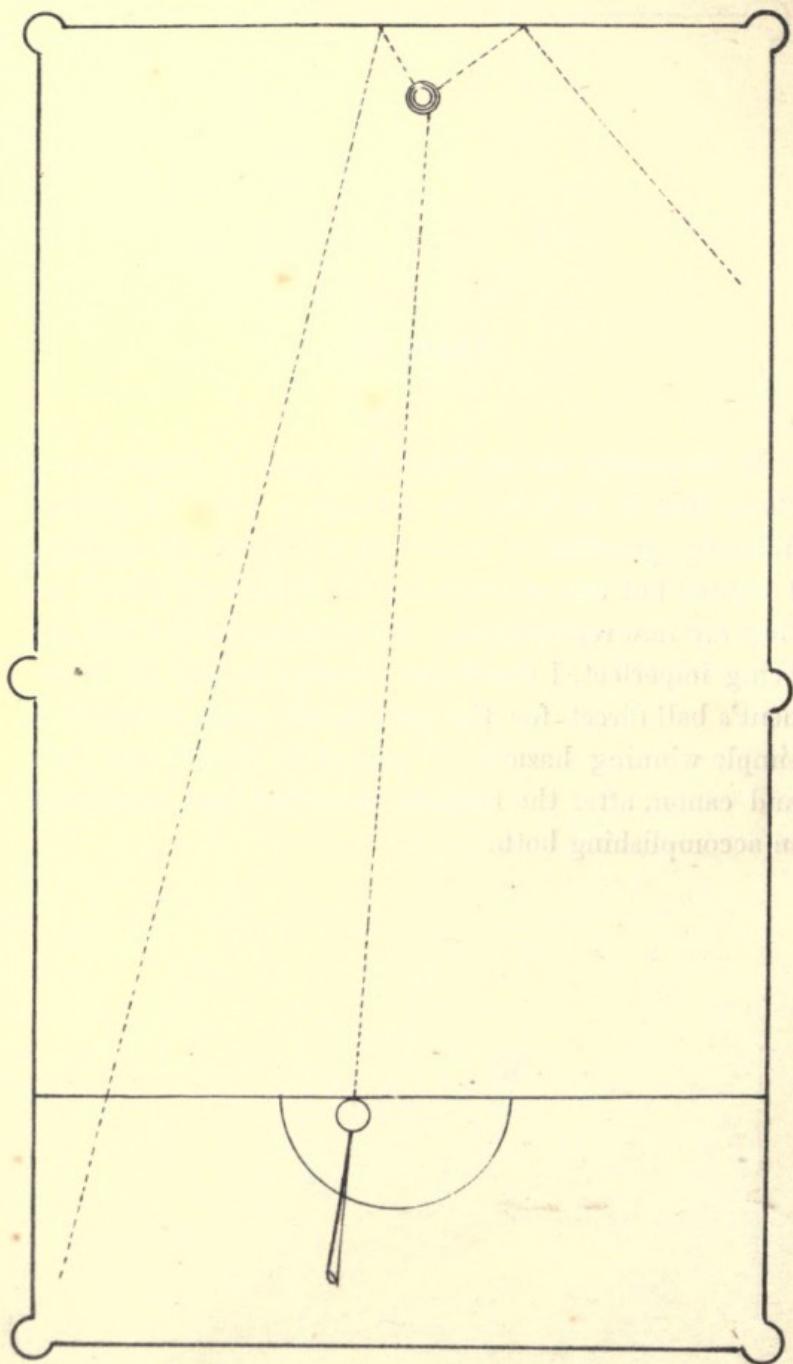


PLATE 26.

In playing off, it is customary to give a miss in the baulk ; but if the opponent gives another, and should place his ball in a judicious situation, the game will then be rather in his favour. I find the best method of playing is to double the red ball for one of the corner pockets, laying my own ball under the side cushion. Should the adversary lead, and play this game against me, I have two modes of acting : if the red ball is doubled within one inch of the pocket, I give a miss and mask the ball ; but if it is nearly a foot from it, I may venture to play for a canon off the white ball, taking, however, especial care in so doing that I double it close to the opposite corner pocket, and leave it as near to the cushion as possible ; for, if I miss scoring, he will be, thus placed, crippled, and perhaps unable to take advantage of anything that I may have left. Should the player dread placing the red ball so near to the corner pocket, he can, by putting his own ball more to the left, double the ball played upon nearly into the centre of the baulk ; but, in the attempt, he must be careful, or the balls will kiss.

PLATE 27

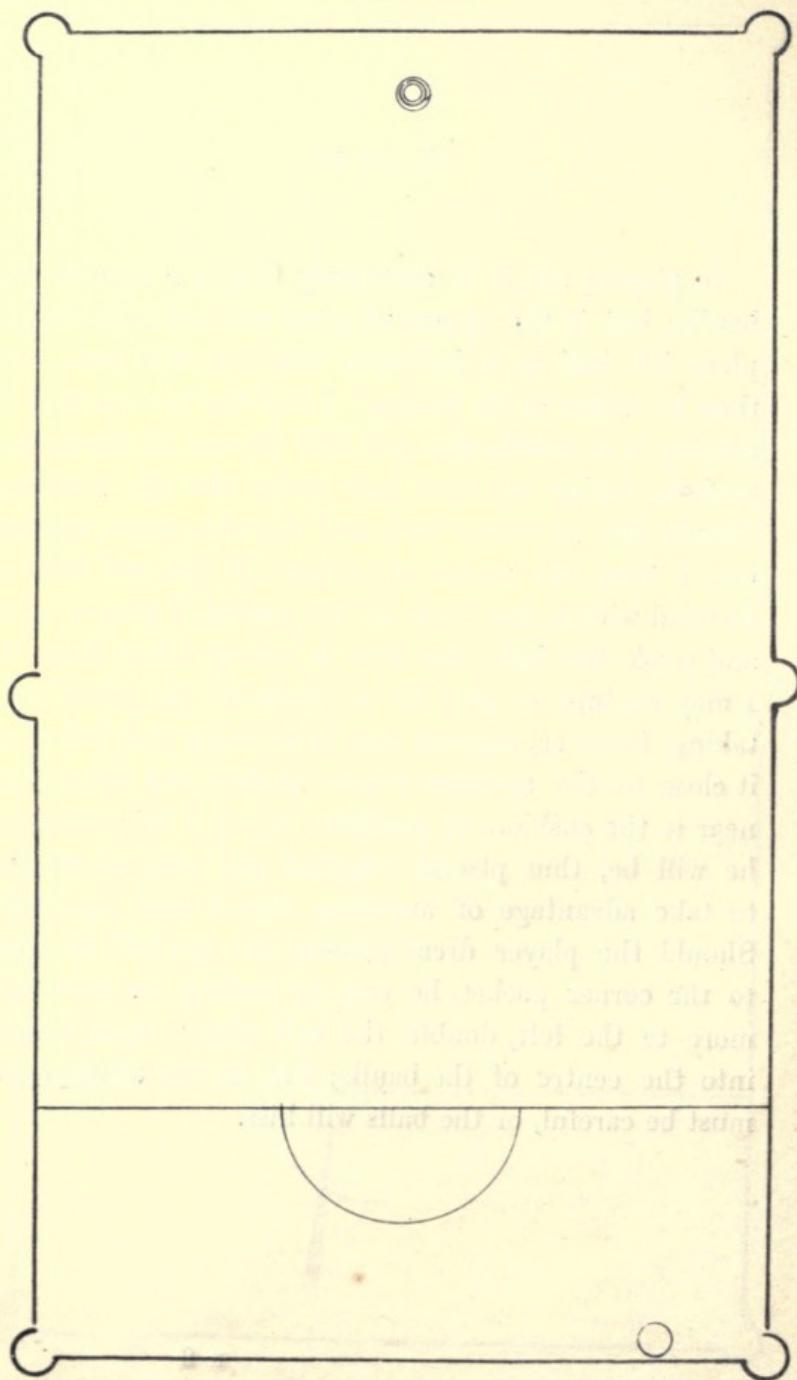


PLATE 27.

When the balls are thus situated, it is frequently the custom of the player, being in hand, to rattle away at the red ball. His opponent's ball being close to the cushion, he imagines there is not much to be apprehended from the next stroke. Nothing can be worse than such a mode of playing. A miss should be given just above the left-hand centre pocket, leaving a losing hazard off the red ball. This will oblige him to play to a disadvantage, for he cannot get out of his difficulties by giving a miss.

PLATE 28

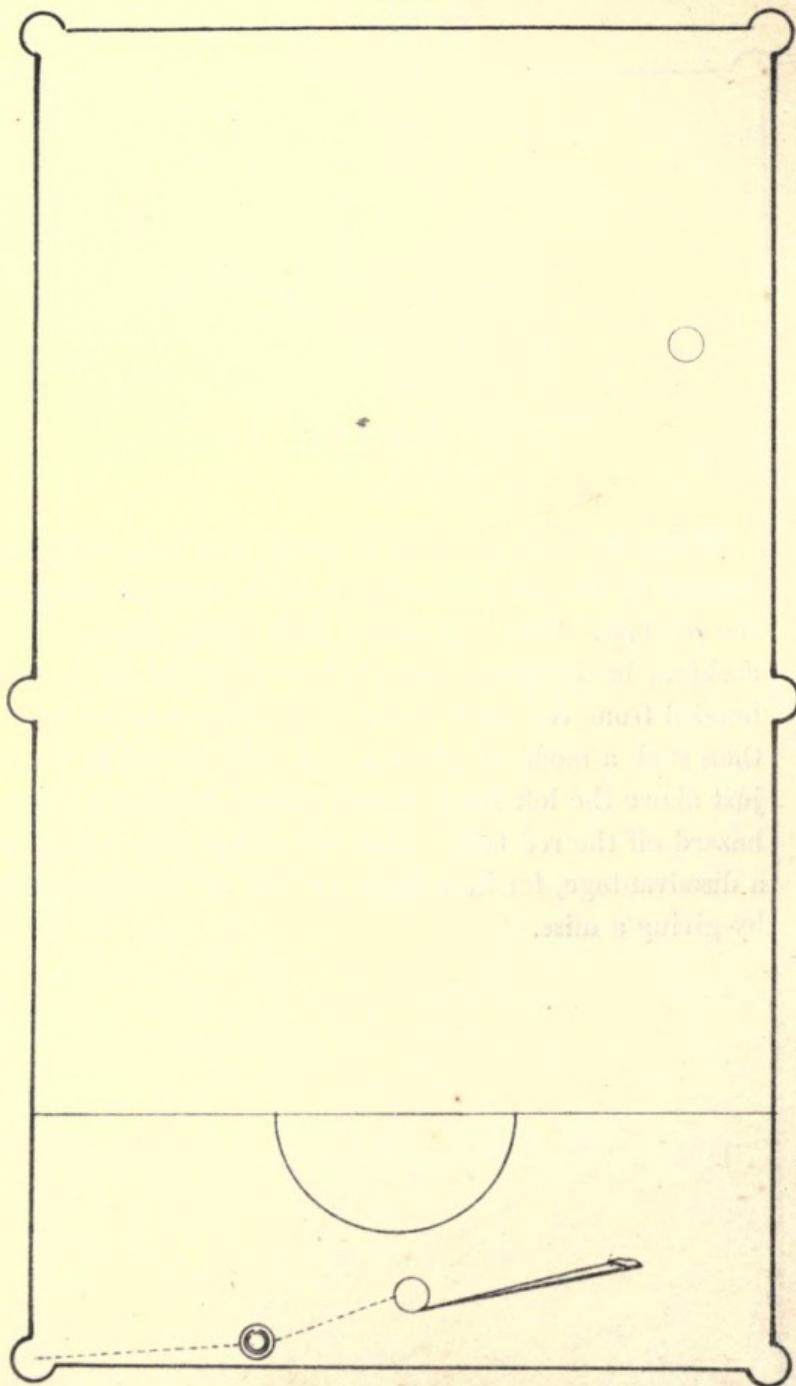


PLATE 28.

LOSING HAZARD BY RUNNING ALONG THE CUSHION.

The holeing of the red ball would be very difficult, and, even if it was effected, it would yield but little. The proper way of playing this ball is to run along the cushion, and hole one's own ball in the corner pocket. The red ball will go out of the baulk, and leave as good a break as could be possibly desired. The ball must be struck upon the left or cushion side, and the object ball nearly full. The player's ball will keep to the cushion, and, if properly struck, it will enter the pocket, although it may have cushioned a foot on this side of it. The majority of players strike the ball high; but I have found the hazard made, from very elastic cushions, to a much greater certainty by striking the ball below the centre and by playing with gentle strength. If the state of the game or the position of the opponent's ball requires the played-with ball to be strongly struck, hitting it above the centre would then be desirable. I called, a few evenings since, the attention of Mr. Howse to these particulars: he became perfectly convinced of the correctness of the remarks. He witnessed my playing the ball, and saw it *cling* to, and scarcely *depart* from, the cushion until it reached the pocket, into which it invariably fell. On playing the stroke above the centre, he saw the ball rebound further from the cushion without evincing the *same* desire of returning to it.

PLATE 29

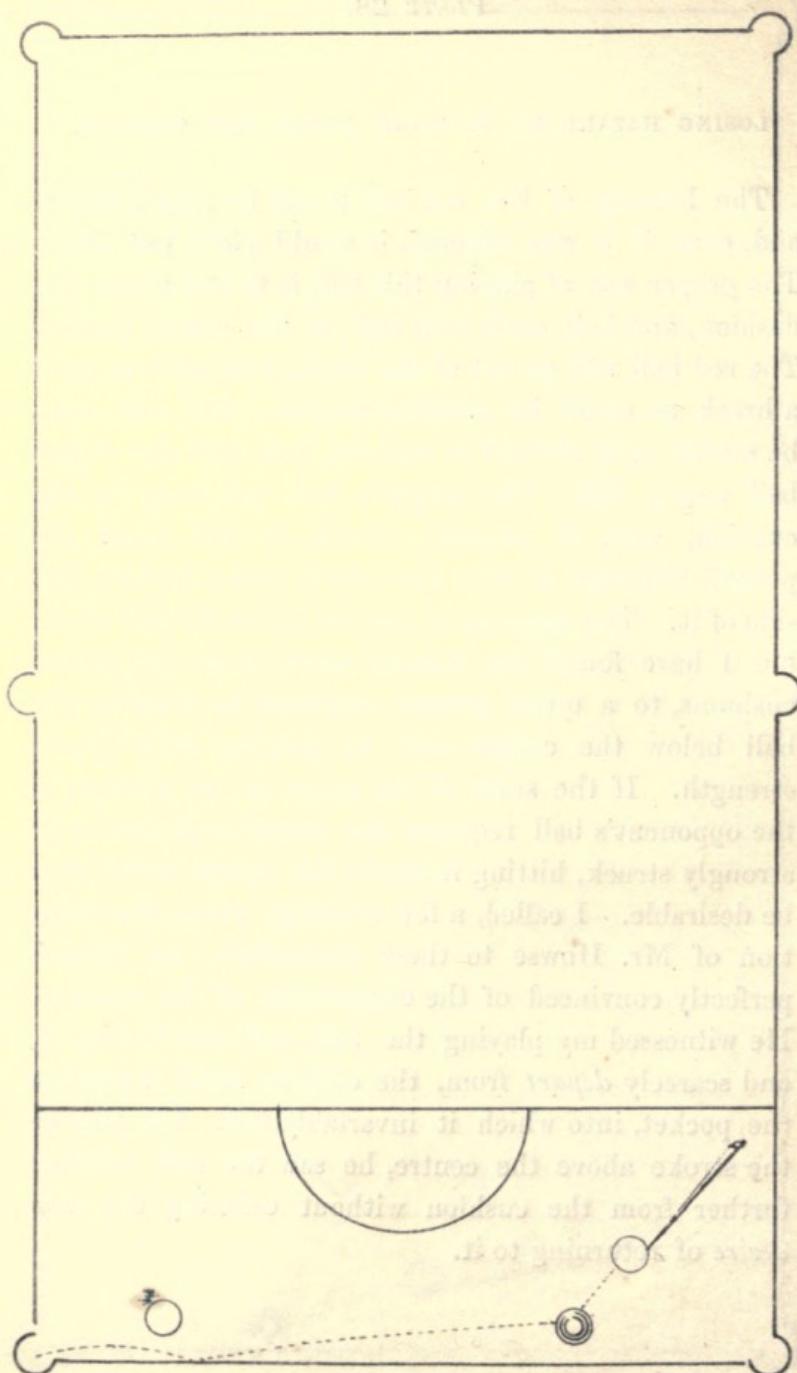


PLATE 29.

SHEWING THE POWER OF THE SIDE TWIST FOR
ENLARGING THE POCKET.

Player's ball near the red.

I wished to exemplify to a friend all that I had said respecting the power of the side twist in enlarging the pocket; and, for this purpose, I placed the balls as they are now represented. Having done so, I enquired if he thought it was possible to put my own ball from the red into the corner pocket that was masked by the white ball. He, knowing nothing of the properties of the side twist, replied that it appeared to be quite impossible. I played, and on the third attempt the ball struck the cushion ere it reached the white, and, clinging to it, passed the ball and entered the pocket. I have before stated that the side twist will be the means of enlarging the pocket more than double its natural size; but its dimensions in this instance were increased to four times its magnitude.

PLATE 30

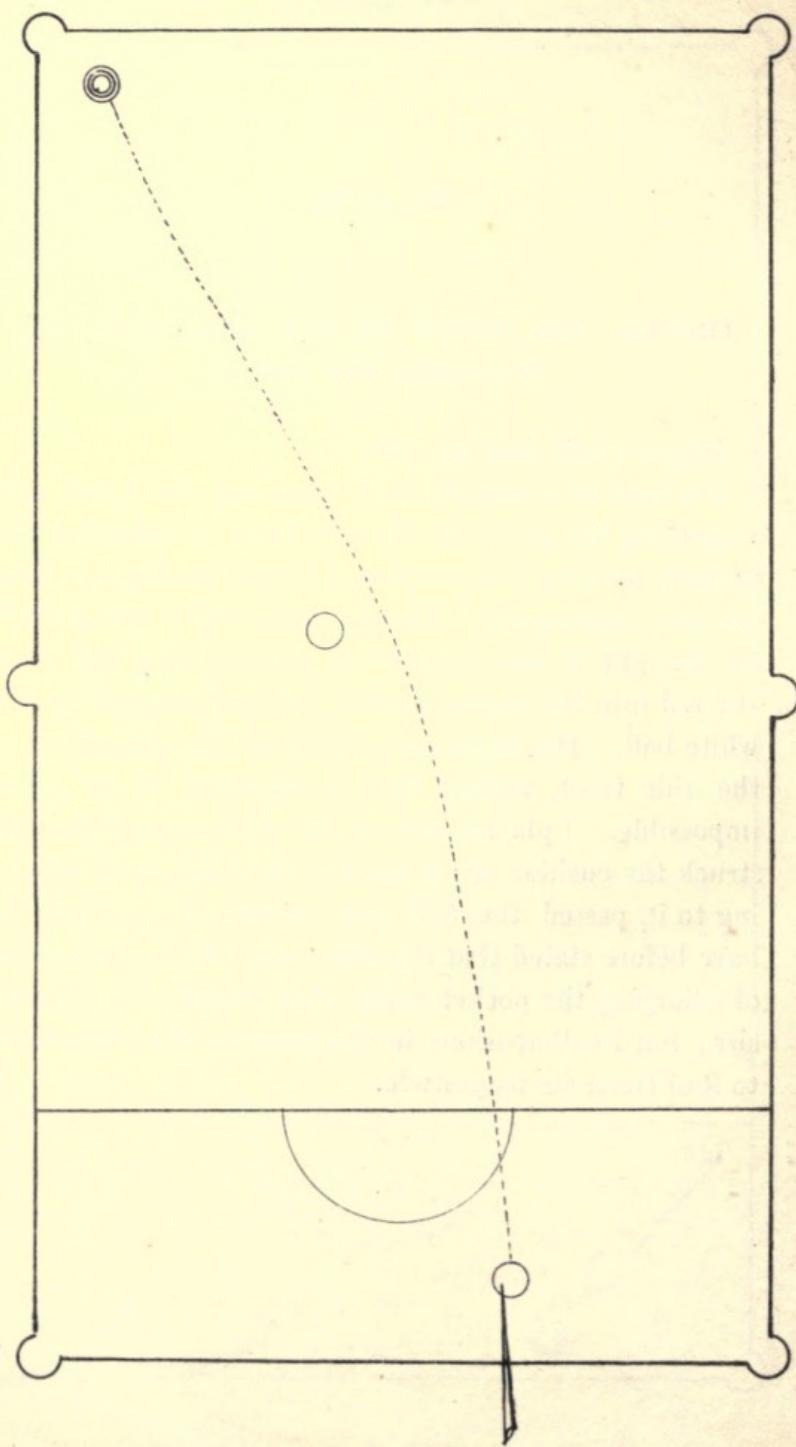


PLATE 30.

TO GO ROUND A BALL.

The red ball is near the corner pocket. If it is left there, the adversary will assuredly obtain it. It must be played at with a strong side stroke, hitting the ball very high, and aiming two or three inches to the right of the white ball. The player's ball will go round it, and hit the red.

I once saw a game played between Mr. Kentfield and the celebrated Carr. Mr. K. was 97, Carr 99. The balls happened to be, on the game stroke, precisely as they are now described in the diagram. Mr. Kentfield made his ball go round the white, and hole the red.

PLATE 31

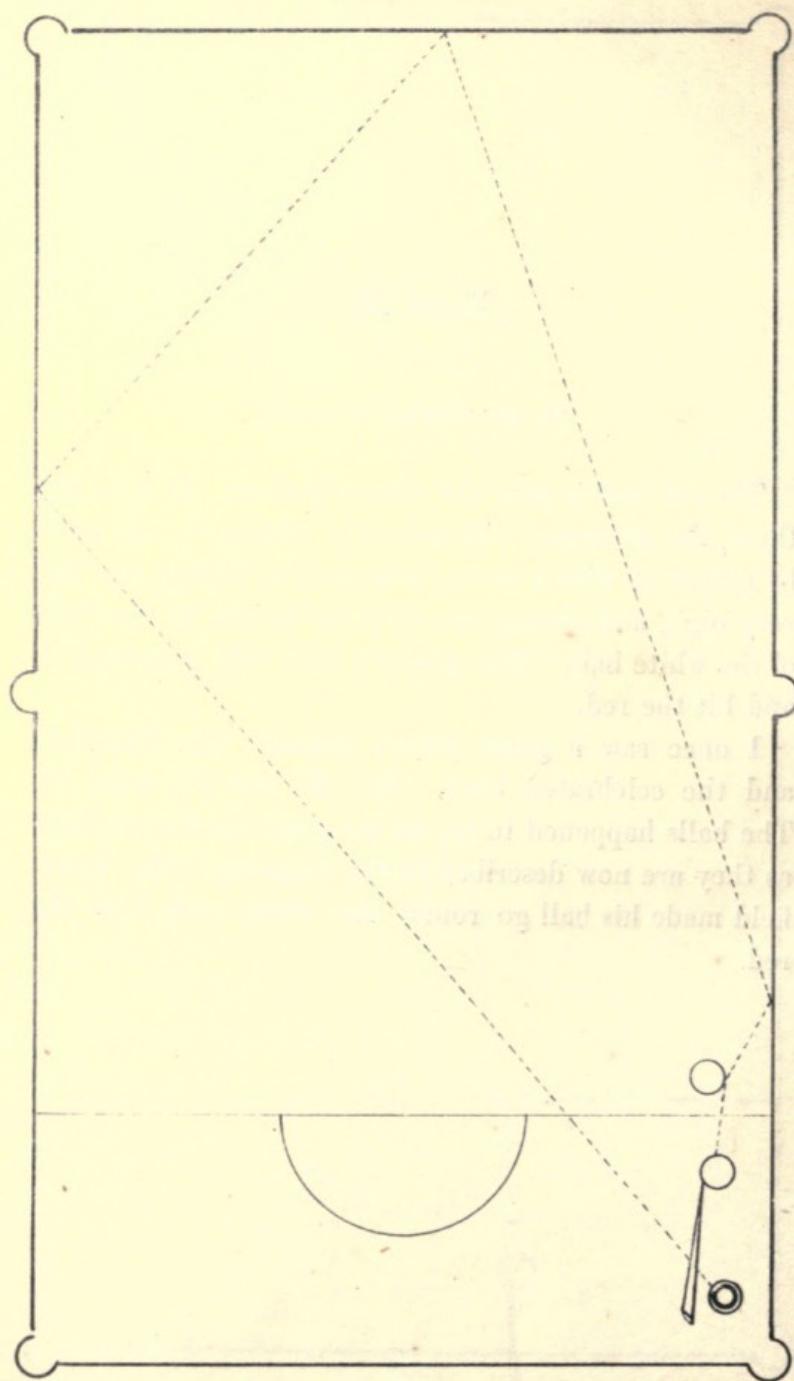


PLATE 31.

THE PERFECTION OF STRENGTH—GOOD PRACTICE.

The player's ball is the centre one.

A sovereign to be placed on the red ball, and a canon made without knocking it off.

The object ball must be struck on the side nearest to the cushion : player's ball will take that cushion, the top one, the left-hand side cushion, and perhaps the lower one ; and can be made to touch the red so gently as not to disturb the coin that is placed upon its top ! I have seen Mr. Kentfield perform this feat repeatedly.

PLATE 32

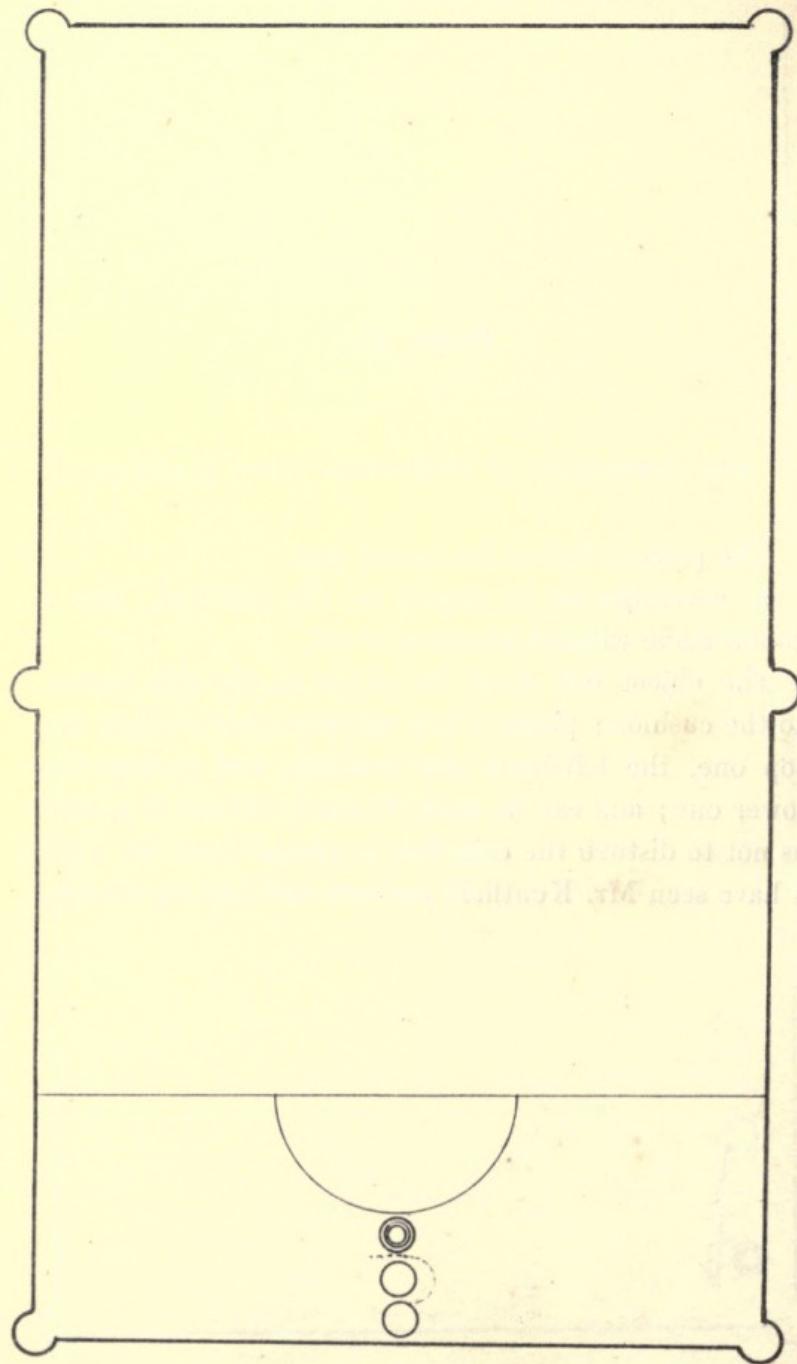


PLATE 32.

THE POWER OF THE SIDE STROKE.

The balls are in a line, and as nearly together as they are represented. Carr would play with the one nearest to the cushion, and make a canon. Strike the ball upon the top, and very much on the side; it will run out an inch or two (either to the right or left, according to the side stroke), and then pop in between the other two. This stroke, to Carr, was a certainty; and I never saw him miss it. He held the cue perpendicularly, and grasped it about half-way down.

PLATE 33

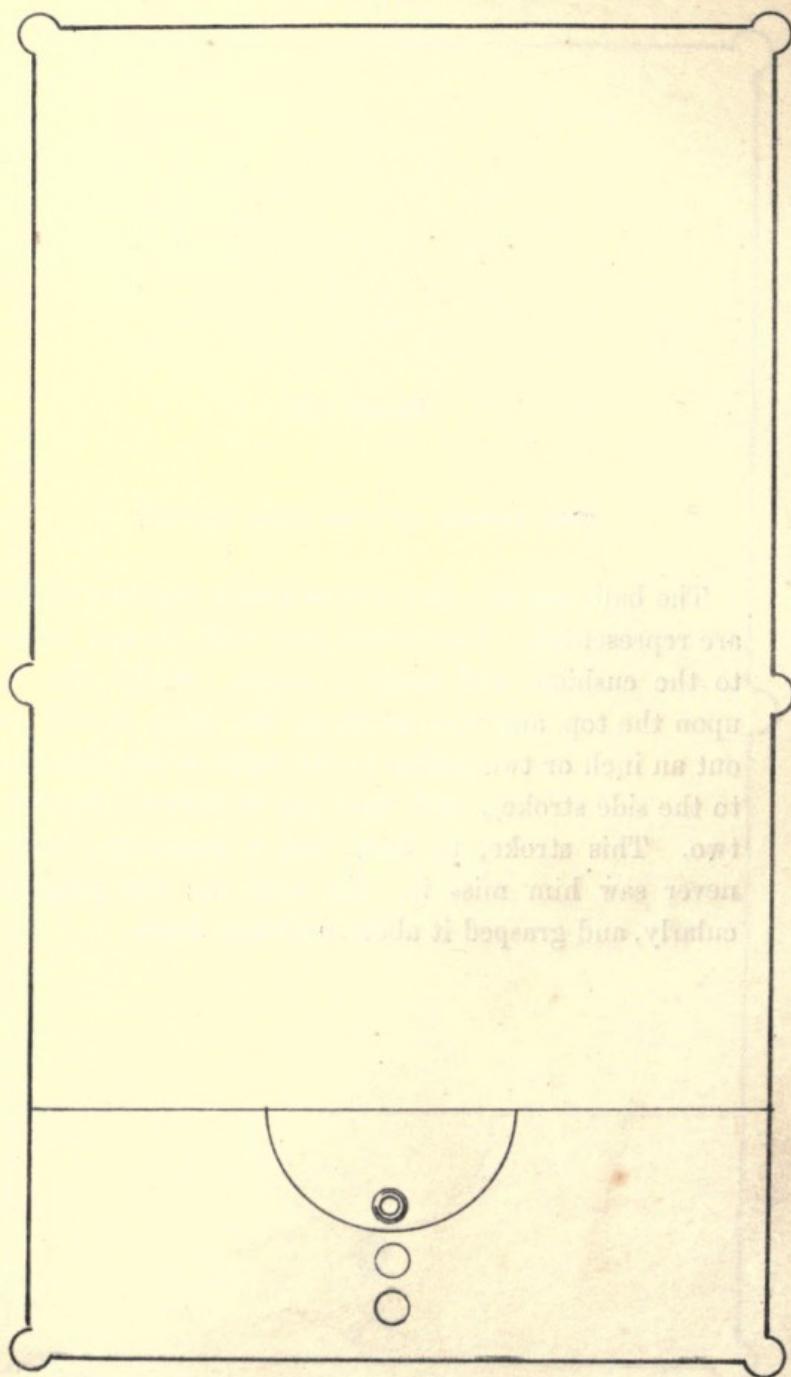


PLATE 33.

CANON.

Player's ball the one nearest to the lower cushion.

The advantage of having the three balls nearly together is well known to, and duly appreciated by, all talented billiard players; and if the canon now represented be properly performed, each ball will remain within the circle.

I consider this stroke to be of considerable importance; and, although it can be made a dozen times in succession by the person who discovered it, I question whether there is any other player (professional or amateur) by whom it could be accomplished, unless he had previously received instruction. The stroke was discovered by Mr. John Pook, of the Cocoa-Tree Club, who, in one lesson, can teach it to even a moderate player. As a teacher of the game in general I can also strongly recommend Mr. Pook to the notice of the public.

PLATE 34

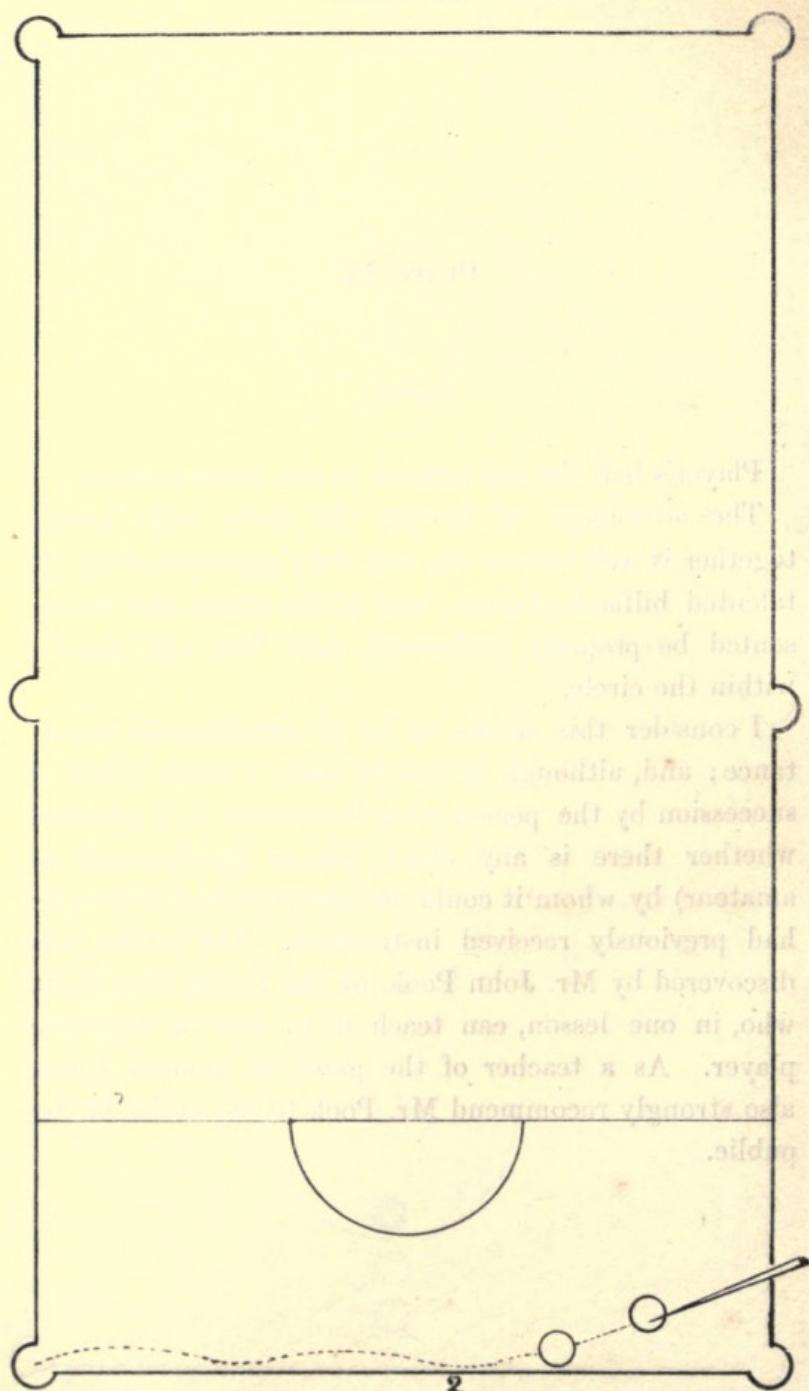


PLATE 34.

I have stated that the dimensions of the pocket can be much enlarged by the application of the side stroke; and the diagram now exhibited will bear out that assertion, as the losing hazard described can be accomplished, although the played-with ball should strike the cushion at the part marked with the Fig. 2. Thus the size of the pocket is increased from three inches to more than three feet! The played-with ball, in this diagram, having a much greater distance to travel than the one described in Plate 28, may render it desirable to strike the ball a little above the centre.

PLATE 35

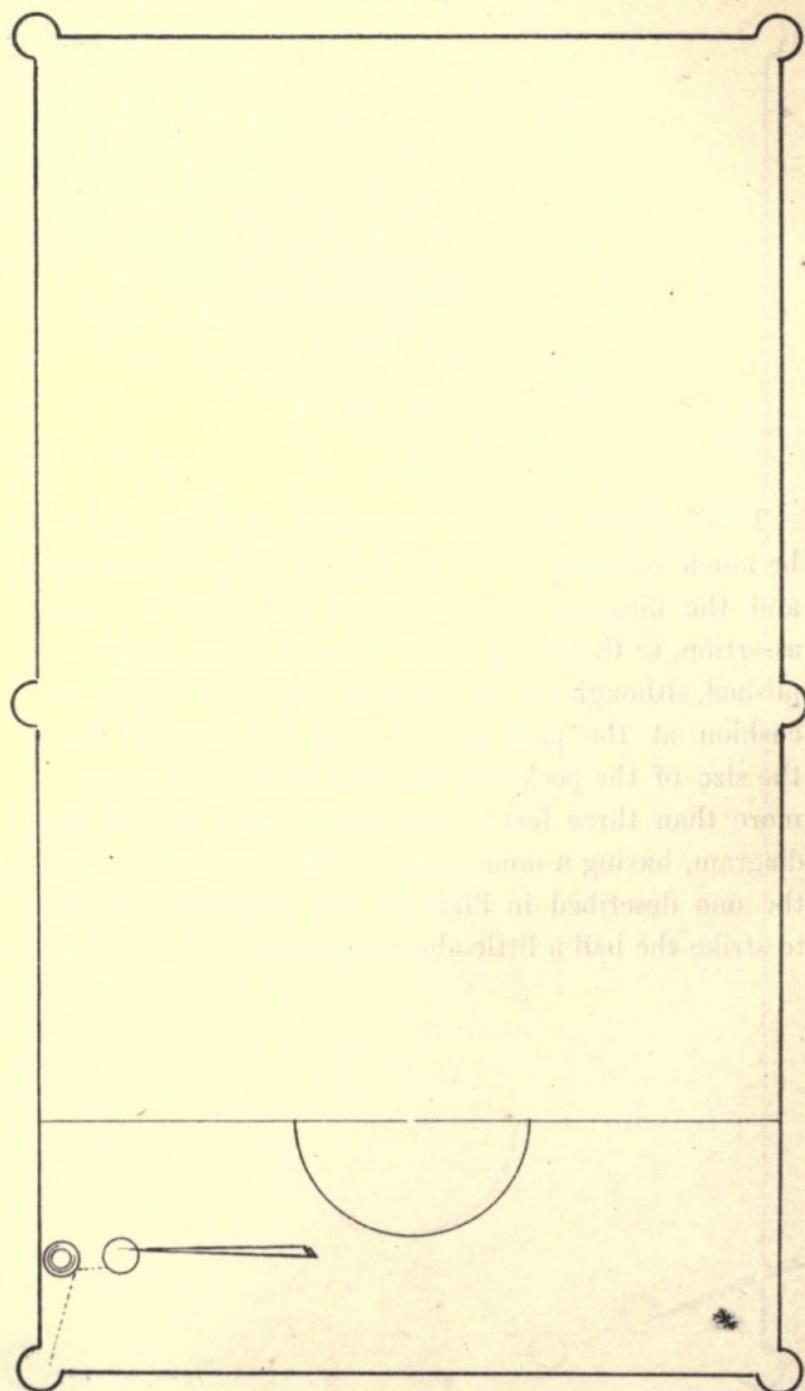


PLATE 35.

LOSING HAZARD BY A KISS.

Opponent's ball being in hand, and the striker's score 20, he should play to hole his own ball through the medium of a kiss. Having done so, he must give a miss some distance from the red : his game will then be 23 and the baulk. The stroke must be played gently, and the ball struck above the centre.

PLATE 36

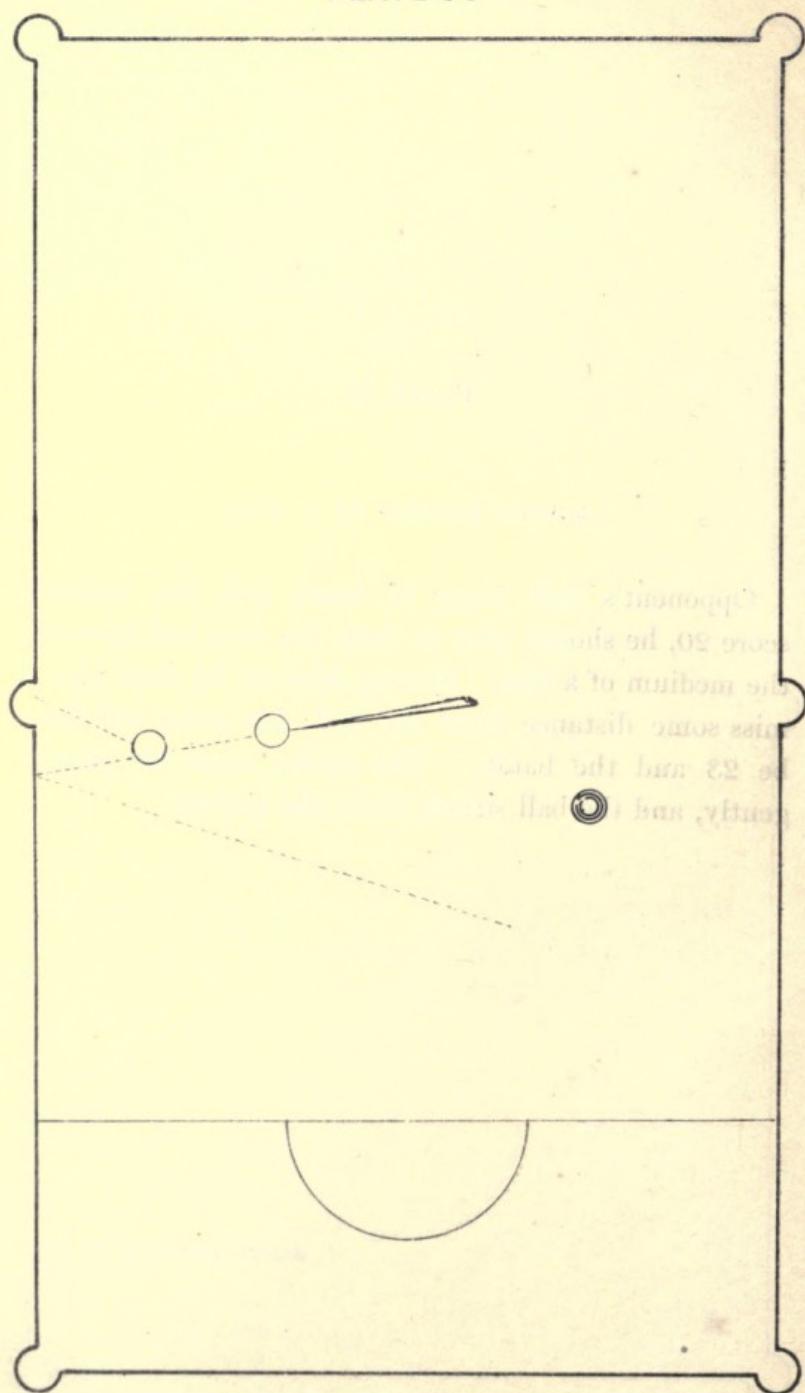




PLATE 36.

The balls being placed as represented, and the striker's ball being the centre one, he must play to walk into the middle pocket. The object ball will cushion, and either cross over to the red or leave a losing hazard; and in either situation, the player's ball being in hand, the break will be most productive. Strokes similar to this, and canons by the walk, should be frequently practised. Upon a fast Table, with a very fine cloth, they are more difficult than they appear.

PLATE 37

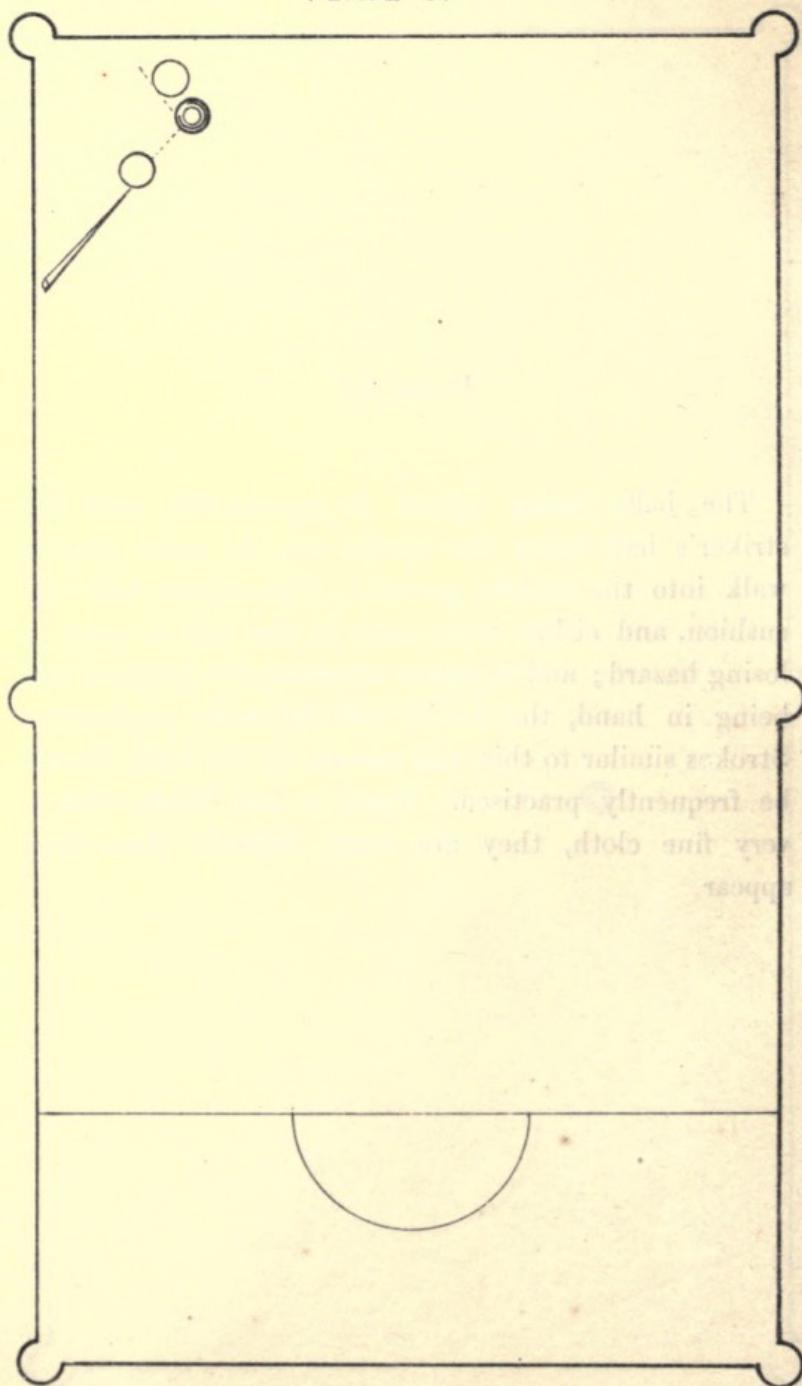


PLATE 37.

A CANON OF GREAT SERVICE.

Player's ball is that nearest to the baulk.

When the balls are thus situated, a great many canons can be made: as many as twenty-six have been made by myself. The secret is, for the player always to pass his own ball so as to have the other two before him, playing very gently, and keeping the balls as nearly together as possible.

PLATE 38

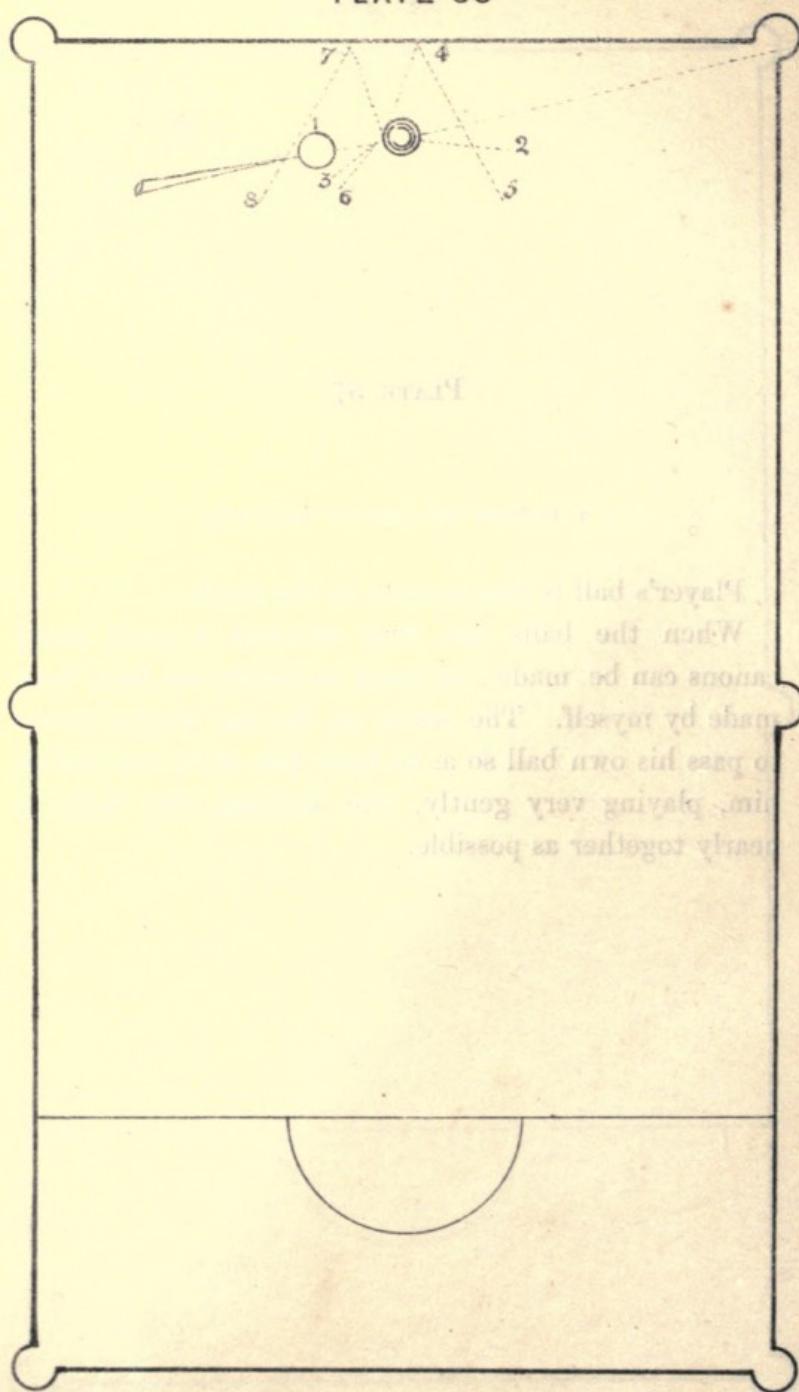


PLATE 38.

THE "SPOT" STROKE.*

This stroke is of great importance; and any one that can play it in a proper manner should never consider the game as lost. If the balls are quite straight, the player must twist his ball back about four inches; if at Fig. 1, the ball must be passed to Fig. 2; from Fig. 3 it must be made to cushion at Fig. 4, and take up the position represented by Fig. 5; from Fig. 6 the ball must be made to cushion at Fig. 7, and return to Fig. 8. From balls placed as last described I have made seven hazards in the same pocket; and May, whose excellence in playing this stroke has already been extolled, frequently completed more than double that number! From the spot stroke, played in the various ways described in the plate, I made, on the Table at the Oriental Club, 75 points, and on the Table in Cork Street I once made 84 points. In playing the ball from Fig. 6 it will be necessary to subdue the progress of the played-with ball, or it will leave the top cushion at too great an angle and travel too far from the red ball. May struck his ball very low, and slightly on the right or counter side.

* Spot stroke continued at Plate 136.

PLATE 39

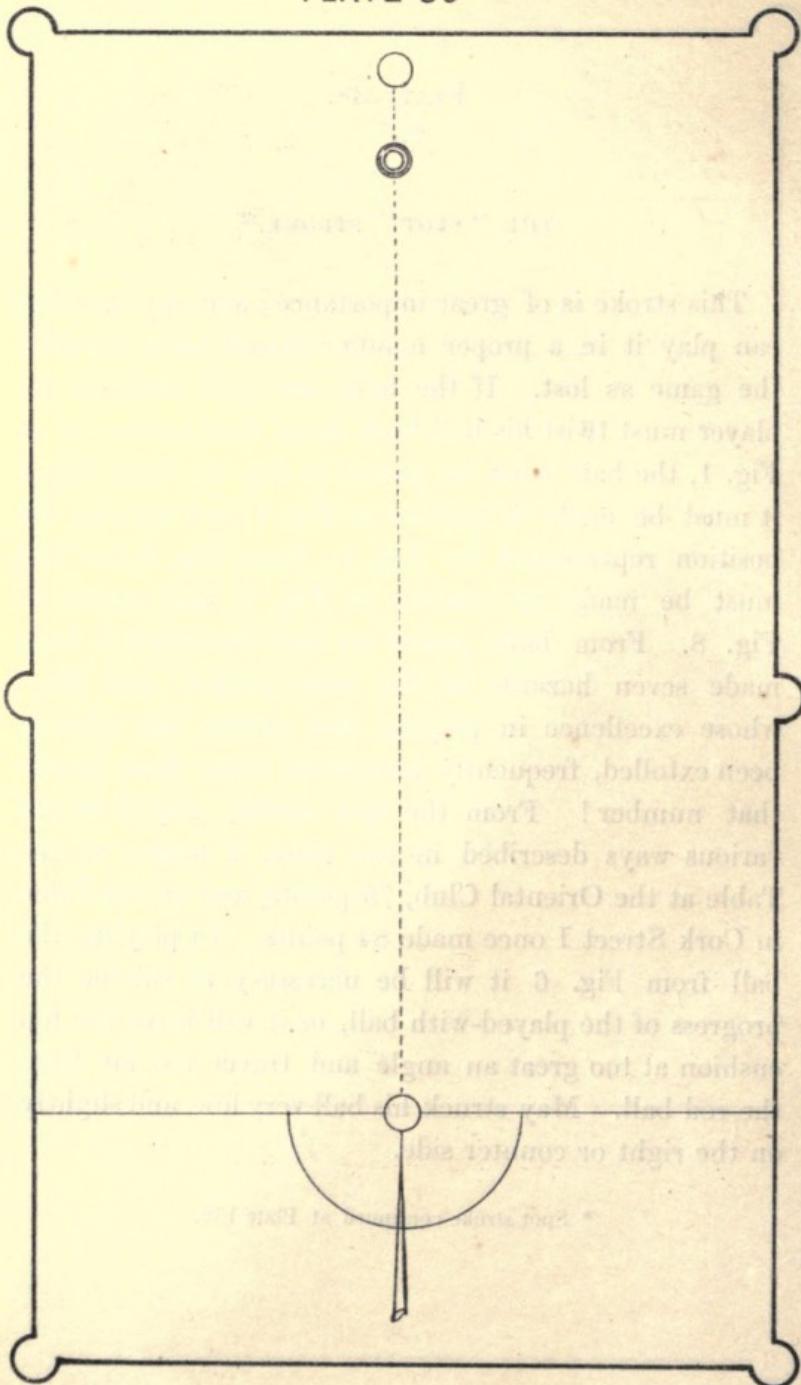


PLATE 39.

A CANON OF GREAT USE.

The red ball being on the spot, and the opponent's ball behind it, the striker, if in hand, may venture to play for a canon. The ball must be hit in the centre and played full upon the red, causing the latter to kiss the white ball, which will meet the player's ball coming back. I saw this canon made a dozen times in succession by a gentleman to whom I could have given eight points out of twenty-four.

PLATE 40

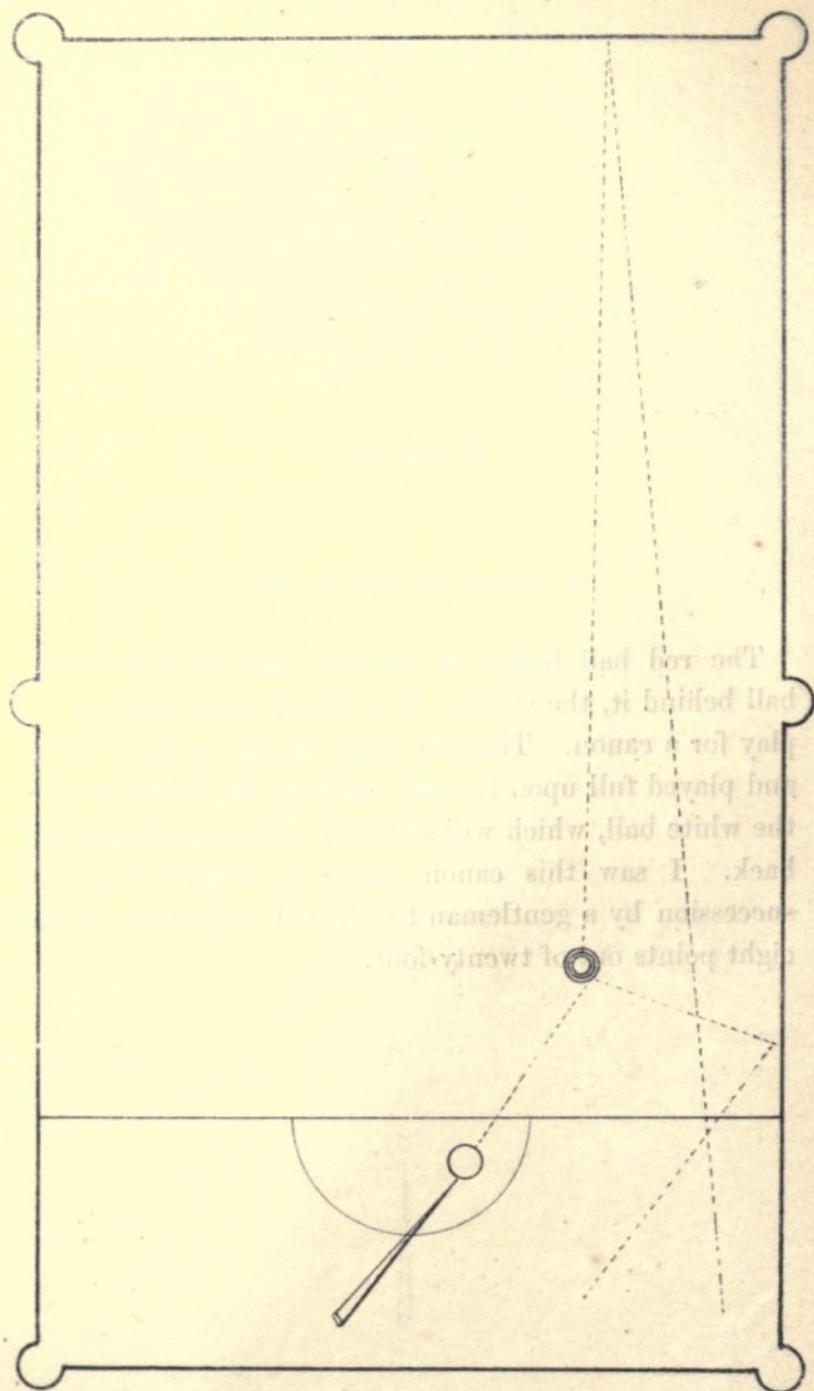


PLATE 40.

SAFETY.

The red ball being thus placed, and the opponent being in hand, it is not right to play to hole the red ball in the centre pocket; for, should the player succeed in effecting it, the chances are against obtaining another score; and should he miss the hazard, his adversary, being in hand, can take a great advantage of the break left. My method of playing is to double the red ball, from the top cushion, over one of the corner pockets in the baulk, bringing my own ball into it also from the side cushion. Should the opponent play back and miss, there will then be two balls upon the Table instead of one, and a great many points may be obtained.

PLATE 41

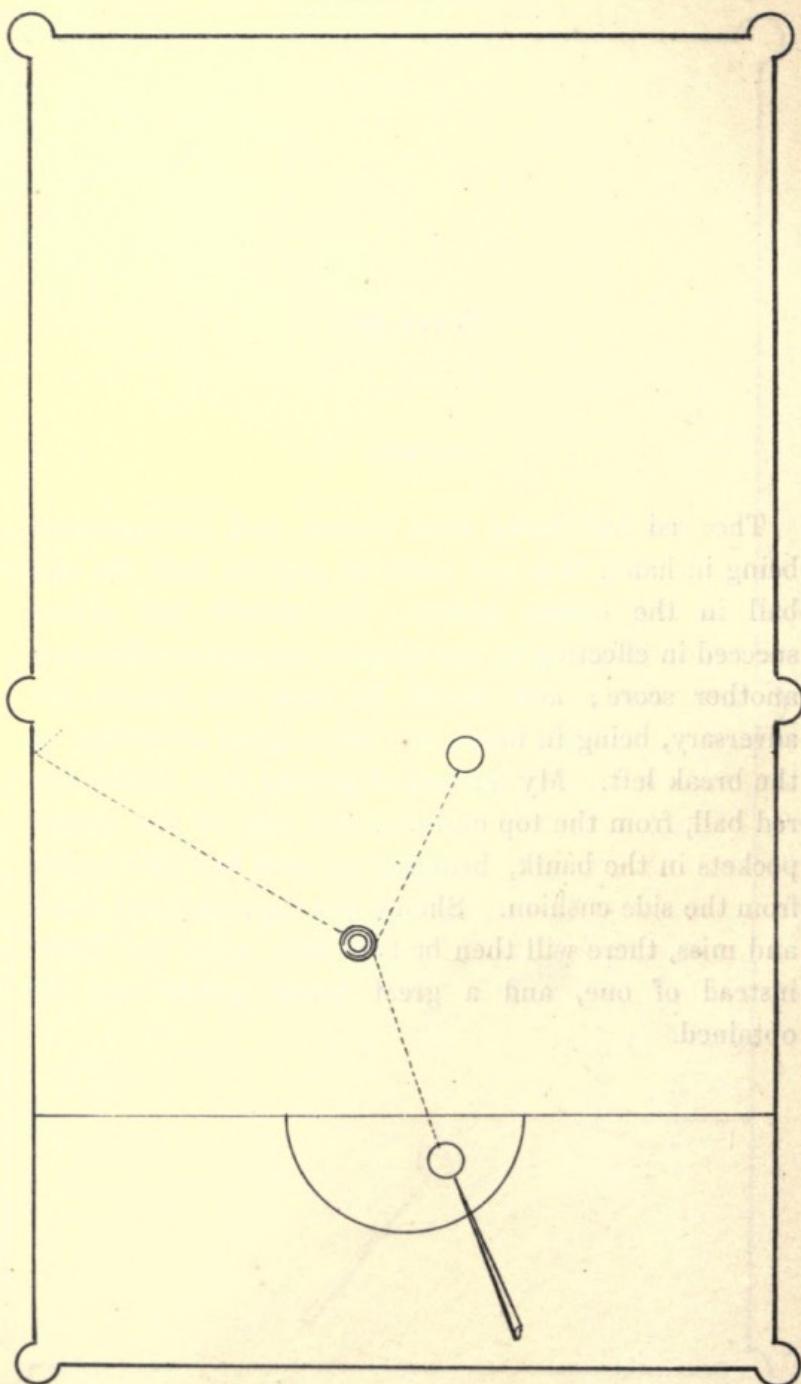


PLATE 41.

Player's ball in hand.

The balls, as now placed, present one of the finest breaks imaginable. If the game is very backward, and fifteen or twenty points are required to complete it, the striker should play for a canon; and it should be made with a strength that will carry the red ball *near* to the centre pocket. Many players hole it, and are well pleased at having made the five; but such a mode of playing is wrong; for, by placing the red ball near to the pocket, a losing hazard will be obtained, and, if properly made, the balls will again present a similar stroke. I have frequently, by this method of playing, made a canon and a losing hazard three times in succession, and have then had as good a break as when I commenced.

PLATE 42

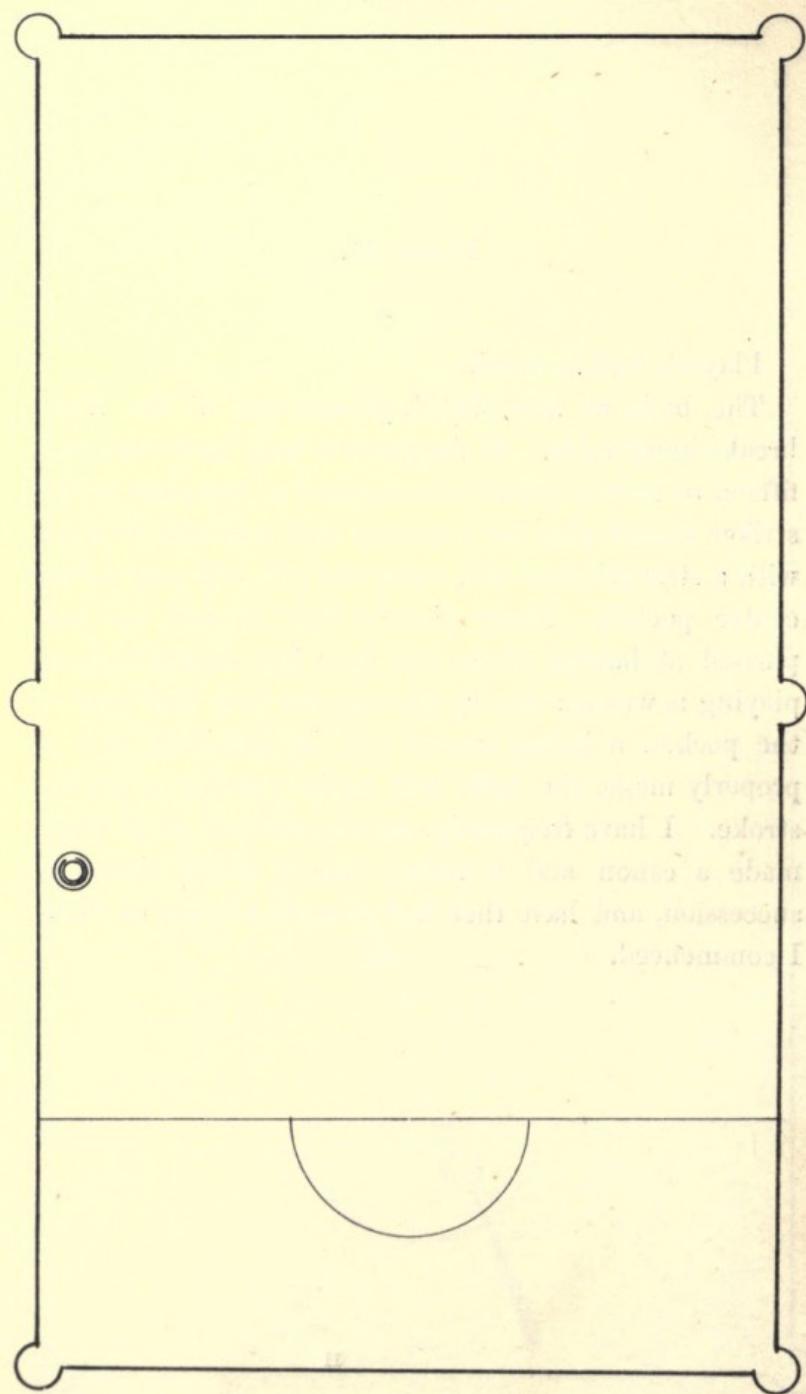


PLATE 42.

THE LOSING HAZARD CALLED "A JENNY."

This losing hazard, upon Tables with list cushions, was one of infinite importance. At Mr. Bedford's rooms a gentleman made, upon one occasion, as many as 102 points in the same pocket, which when effected, and the game won, the ball remained in as good a position as when he commenced.

Upon a very fast Table the stroke seldom leaves a second hazard ; and the best method of playing it is to bring the object ball into the centre of the Table.

PLATE 43

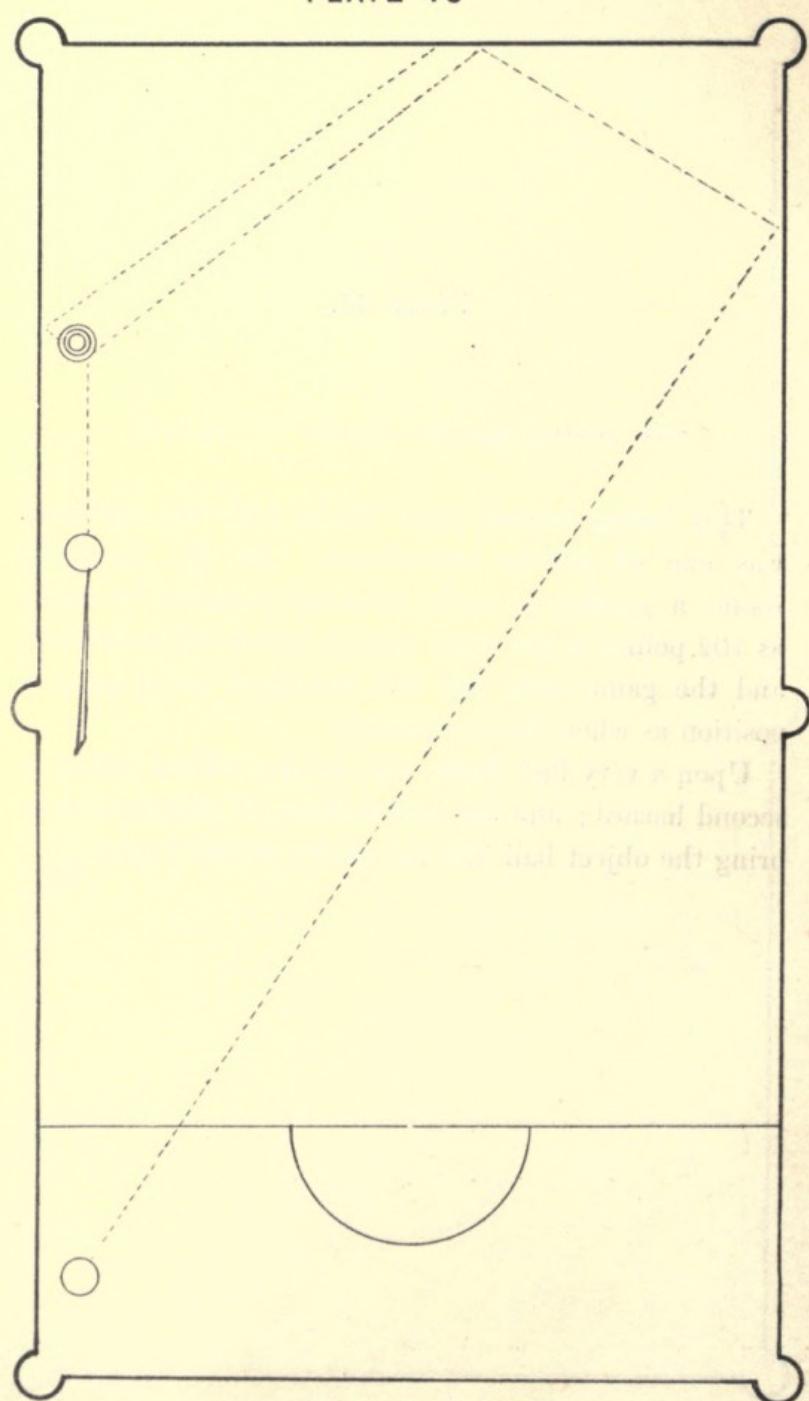
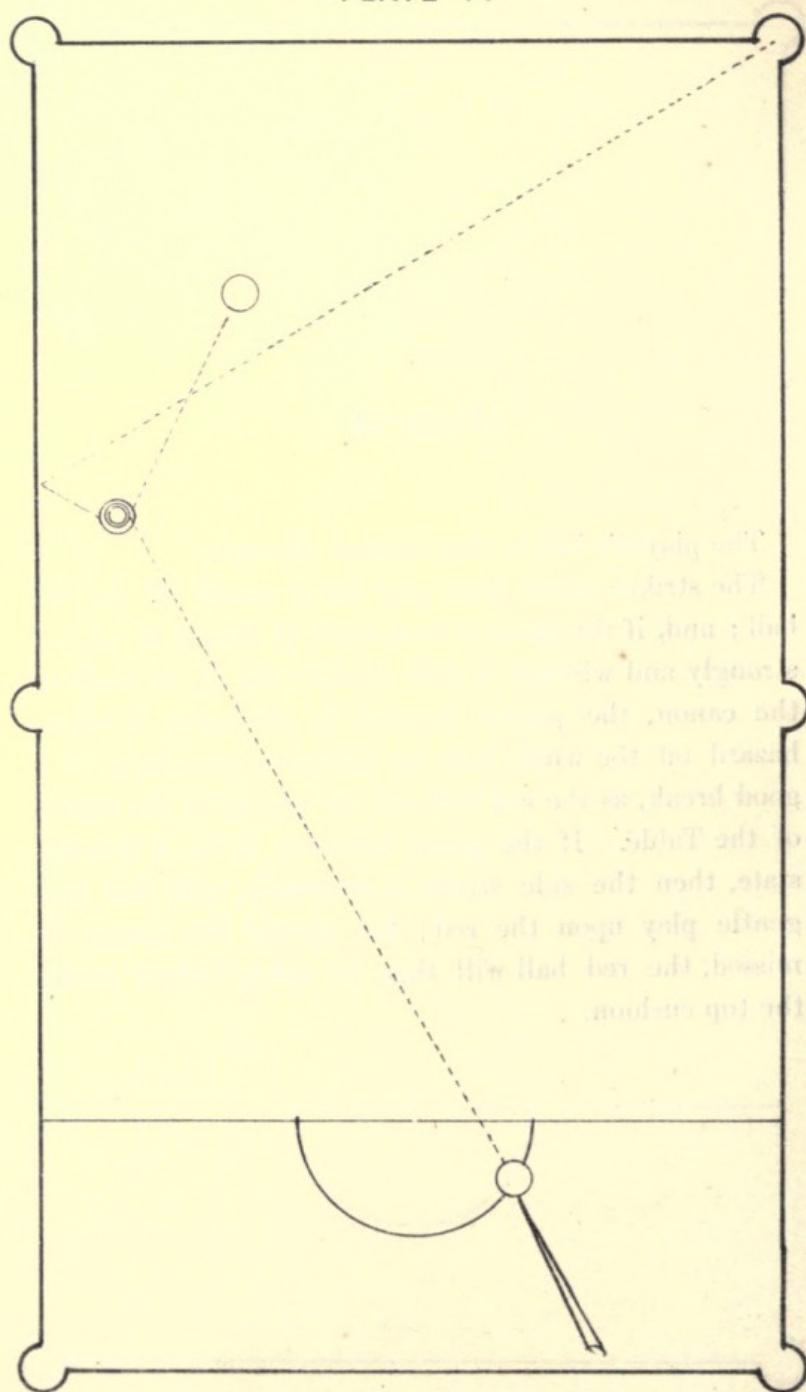


PLATE 43.

The player's ball is that nearest the red.

The striker must here play for a canon off the red ball ; and, if the game is backward, it should be played strongly and without a side stroke : for if, in making the canon, the player succeed in obtaining a losing hazard off the white ball, he will be in possession of a good break, as the red ball will be placed in the centre of the Table. If the game, however, is in a forward state, then the side stroke is necessary, with fine and gentle play upon the red ; for, should the canon be missed, the red ball will then be safely lodged under the top cushion.

PLATE 44.



+ 34 37839

PLATE 44.

This canon is of the greatest service, and should be frequently practised.

Player's ball in hand. In making this canon, if the game is much behind, the red ball must be struck to double it from the left-hand side cushion over to the right-hand corner pocket, knocking the white ball as nearly as possible to the spot; for, after holeing the red, there will be one of the finest breaks imaginable. From balls so situated, I once saw a run of ninety points! If but six or eight points of the game be required, then the canon must be made on the left side of the white ball; for, by carrying it over to the red, the few points wanted will be insured.

*

PLATE 45

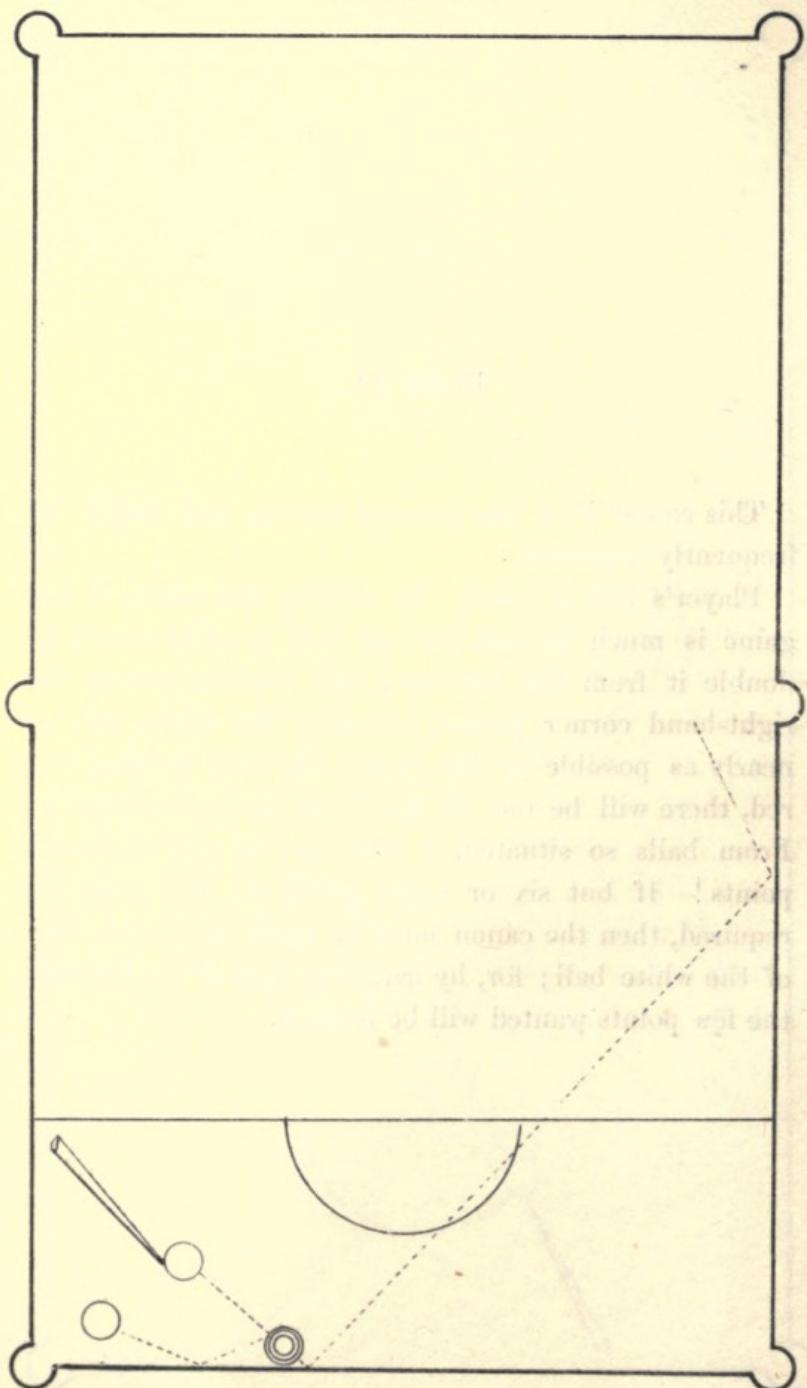


PLATE 45.

The centre ball is the player's.

The balls were thus situated when the player had twenty points to make. The generality of persons would have holed the white ball and have made a baulk; but the baulk might have been disturbed, and no score left. The player, with a powerful side twist, made a canon from the red ball, and doubled it over the centre pocket; and, by playing the stroke very gently, he obtained a losing hazard off the white. This hazard being made, and the ball taken out of the baulk, he possessed as fine a break as could be desired, and the twenty points were easily made.

PLATE 46

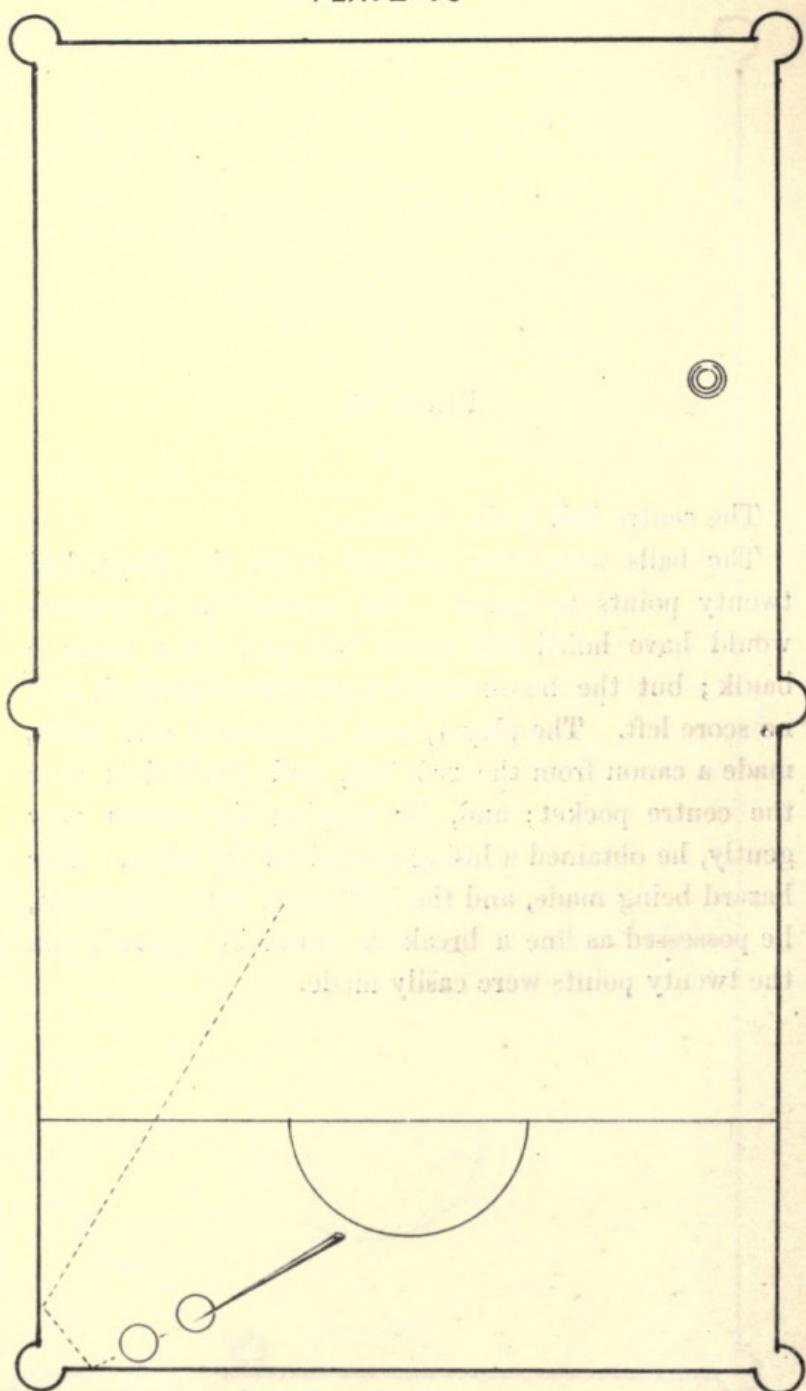


PLATE 46.

Player's ball the farthest from the baulk pocket.

There is not any part of the game more serviceable than that of being enabled to convert a winning hazard into a losing one. If the balls were placed as the representation shews them, and the game was 18 to 23, it is clear, if the striker pockets his opponent's ball, that the next stroke will be much against him; but if he walk through the white ball, bringing it out of the baulk, and make a losing hazard off it, the winning of the game will then be nearly certain.

The losing hazard thus described can always be accomplished if there is room for the object ball to pass without kissing.

PLATE 47

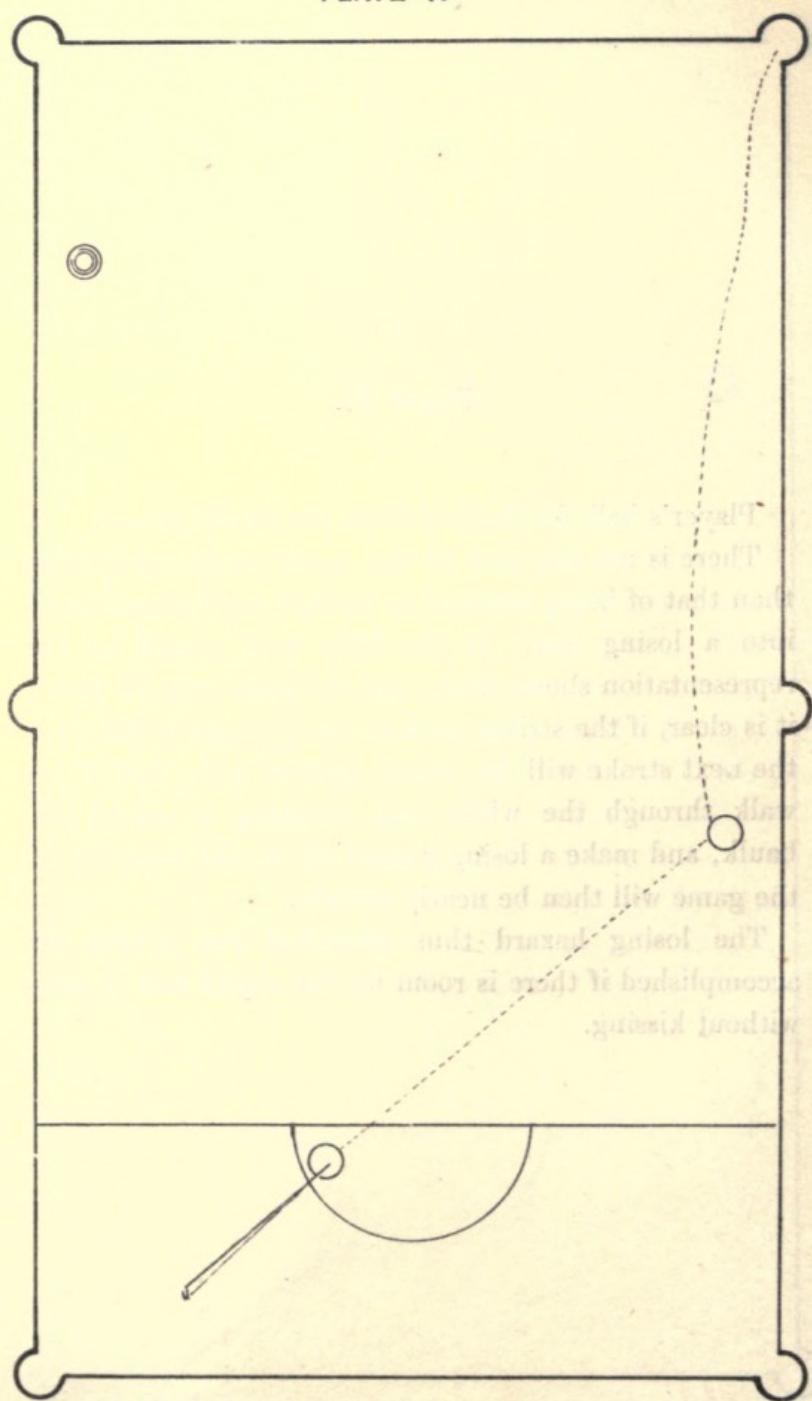


PLATE 47.

LOSING HAZARD.

When the balls are in this position, and the player's ball in hand, he must play to hole it in the right-hand corner pocket. It will require a strong side twist, and he must not play it with more strength than sufficient to double his opponent's ball over to the red. In all probability, the balls will not be more than four inches apart, and will leave, consequently, the prospect of a good break.

PLATE 48

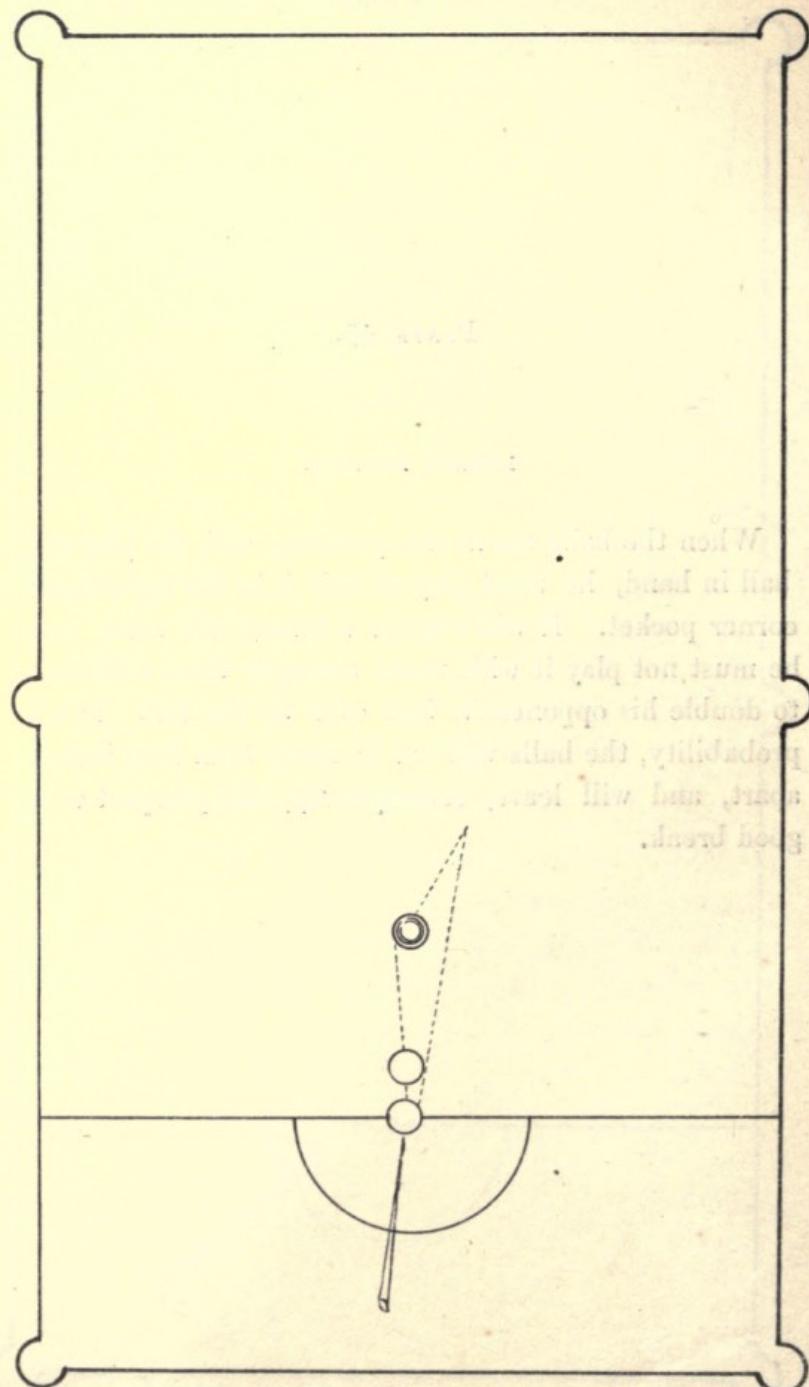


PLATE 48.

CANON.

The balls being thus placed, and in a direct line, the novice would believe them to be safe: nevertheless, it is almost a certain canon. It is made by a push. The centre ball knocks the other a little on one side, and the player's ball catches it while it is moving. Mr. Pook can teach any one to make this invaluable canon in one lesson.

PLATE 49

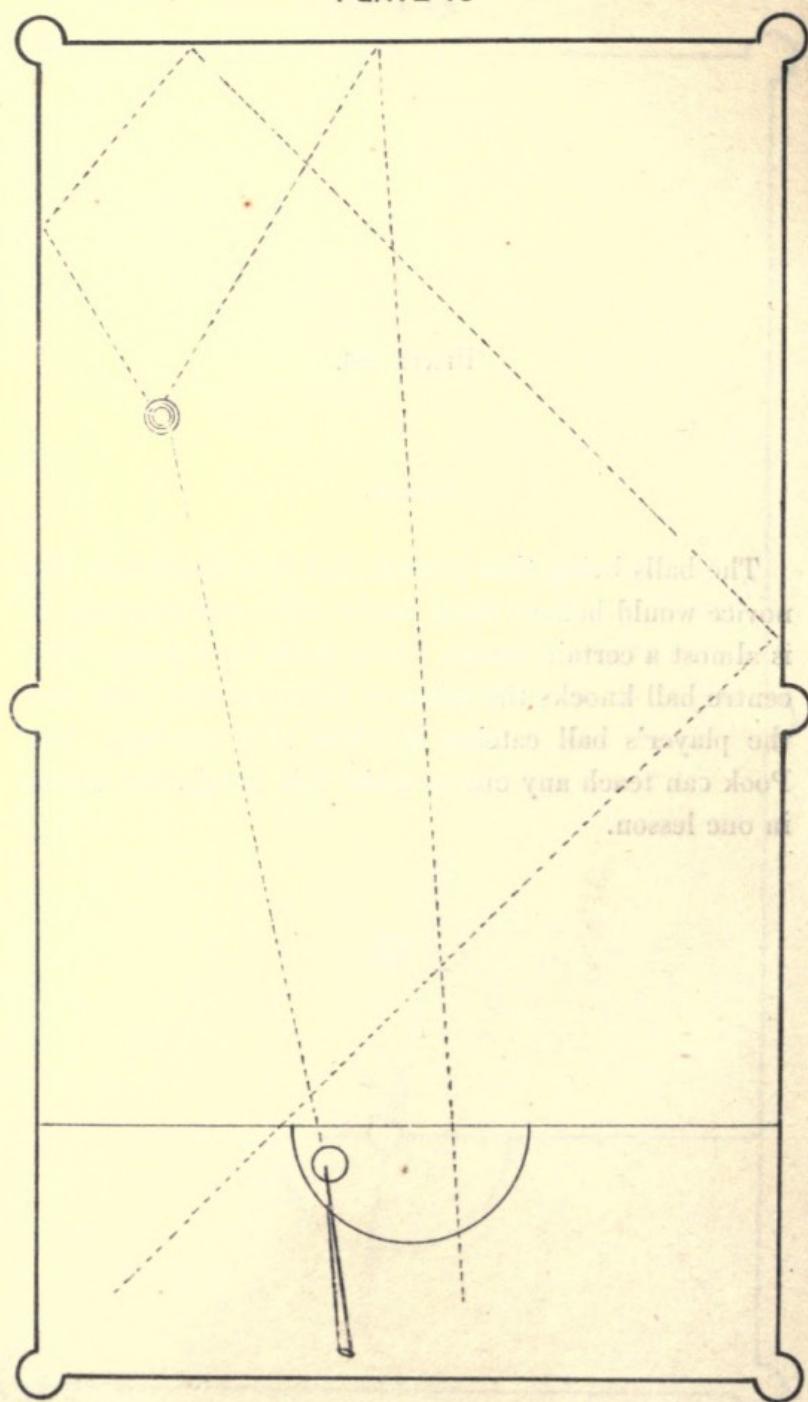


PLATE 49.

TO MAKE A BAULK.

This stroke is of infinite use, and it is one worthy of much practice.

Strike the red ball nearly a three-quarter ball. It will reach the baulk from the side and top cushions. The player's ball will return from the top cushion direct.

PLATE 50

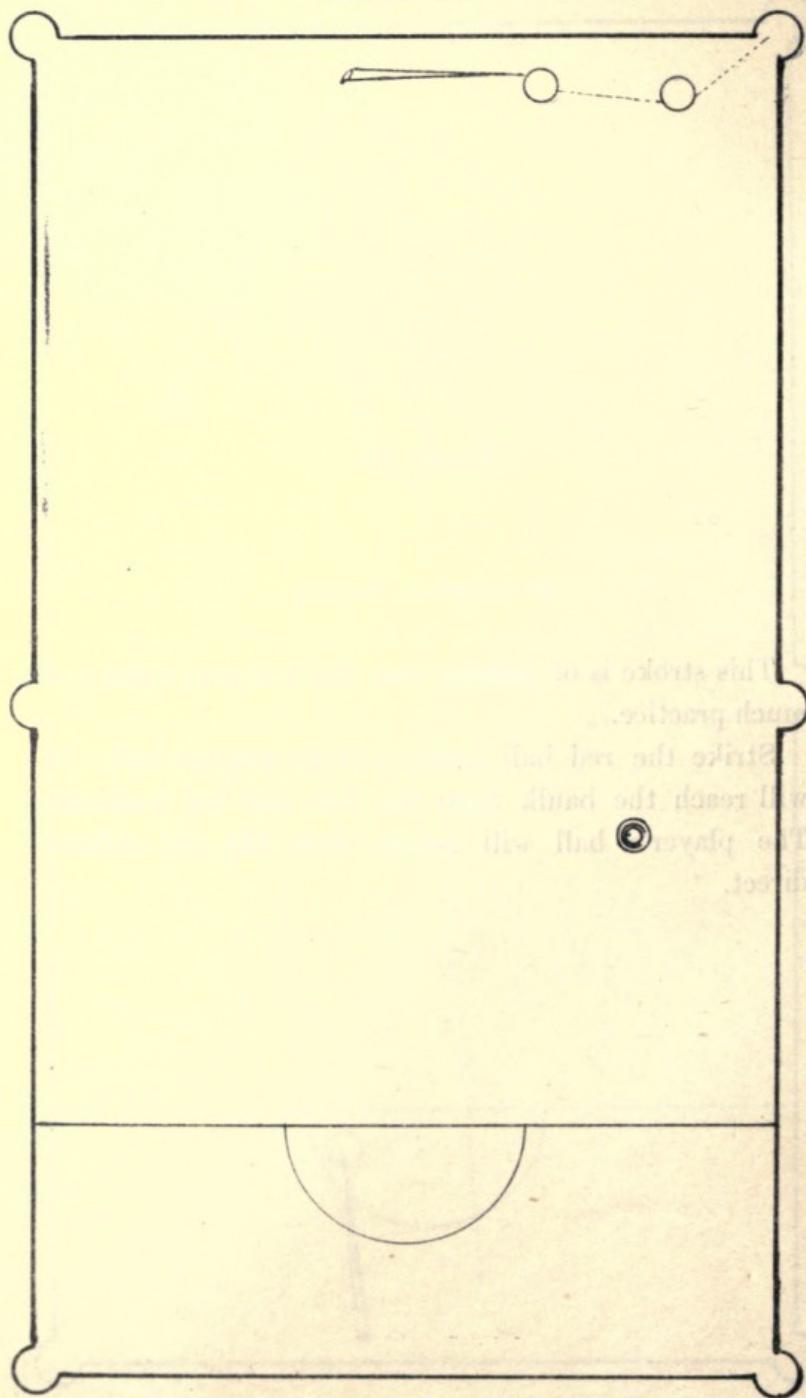


PLATE 50.

If the ball farthest from the corner pocket is the player's, and the game is much against him, it is proper to play for a losing hazard off the white ball. This is done by a walk, and by striking the ball on the side next to the cushion. If the game, however, is in a state of forwardness, the opponent's ball should be holed, and a baulk made.

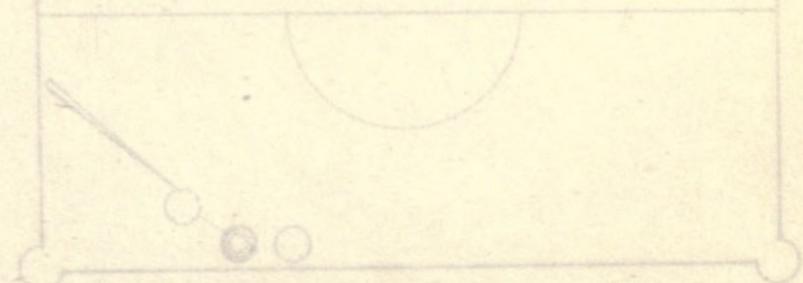


PLATE 51

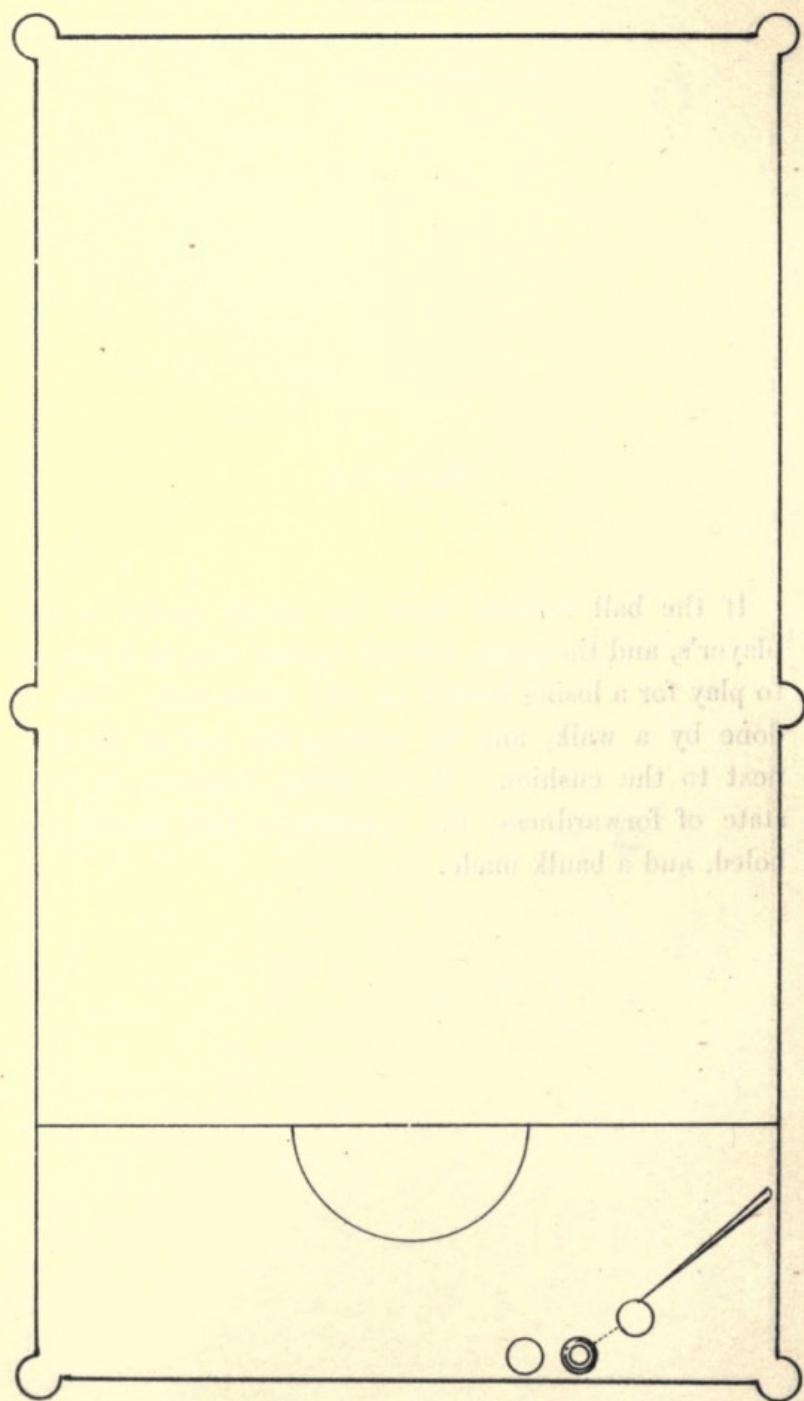


PLATE 51.

CANON.

The player's ball is the one farthest from the cushion ; the others touch it, and are scarcely one inch apart. When the balls were thus placed, I thought it was impossible to make a canon, seeing that the space between them would not allow the first ball to pass without knocking the other away. A Noble Lord (4 points in 24 worse than myself, and to whom I am indebted for the stroke) succeeded in making it upon every attempt. It is made with a strong side stroke, which enables the player's ball to follow up the other, after it has been struck from its original position.

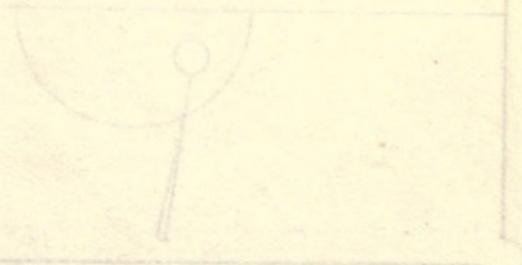


PLATE 52

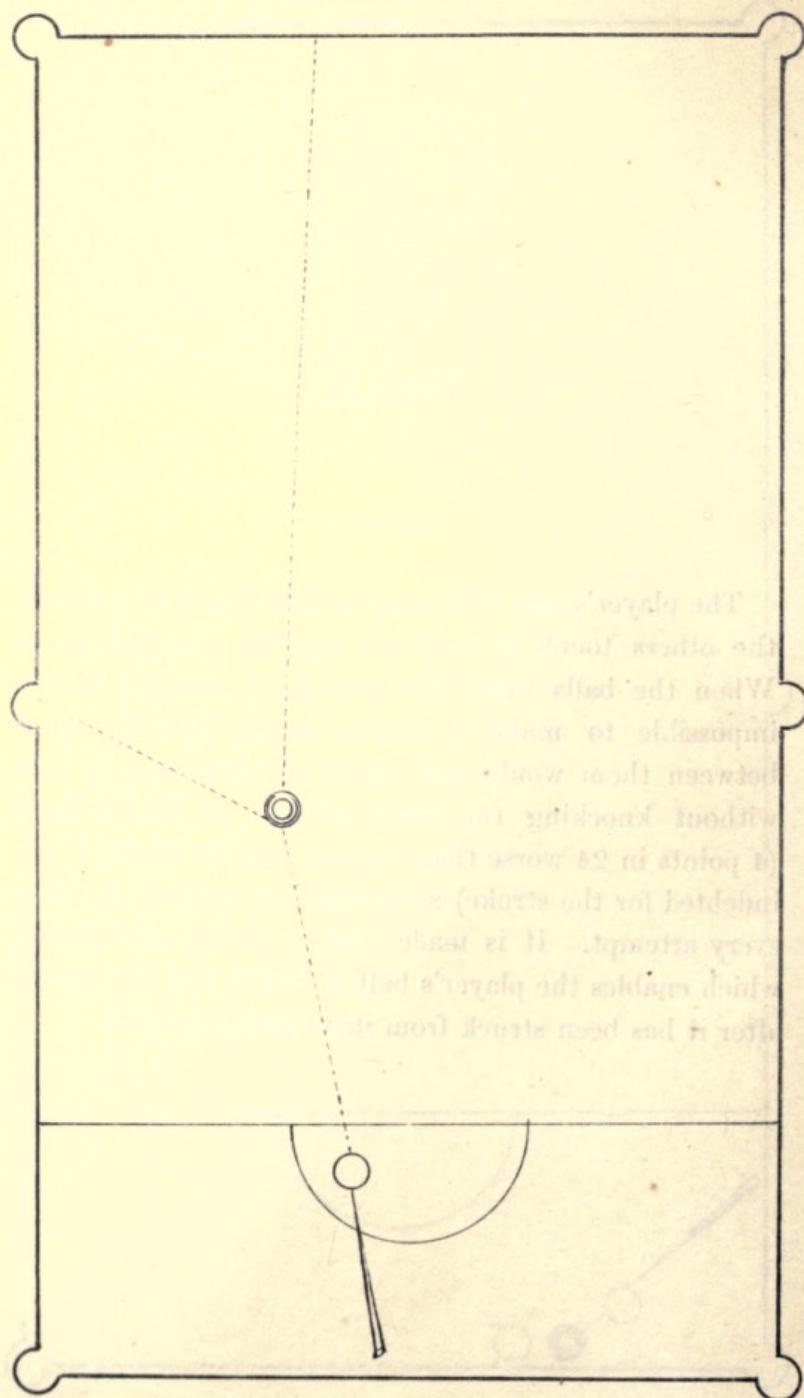


PLATE 52.

LOSING HAZARD.

This is the hazard that I have stated to be so valuable. The player's ball must be placed in such a situation that the object ball shall return to nearly the same position. The great secret of the stroke is in bringing the ball about fifteen inches below the centre pocket, and in keeping it at least half a yard from the side cushion. I have played with a nobleman upwards of thirteen hundred games, at 5 points in 24; and I am sure he will readily acknowledge that for the honour of my victory I am entirely indebted to the losing hazard now described. Once, when practising the stroke, I made 57 points in the two middle pockets.

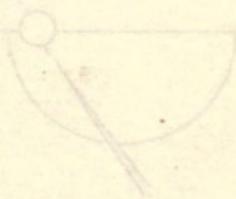


PLATE 53

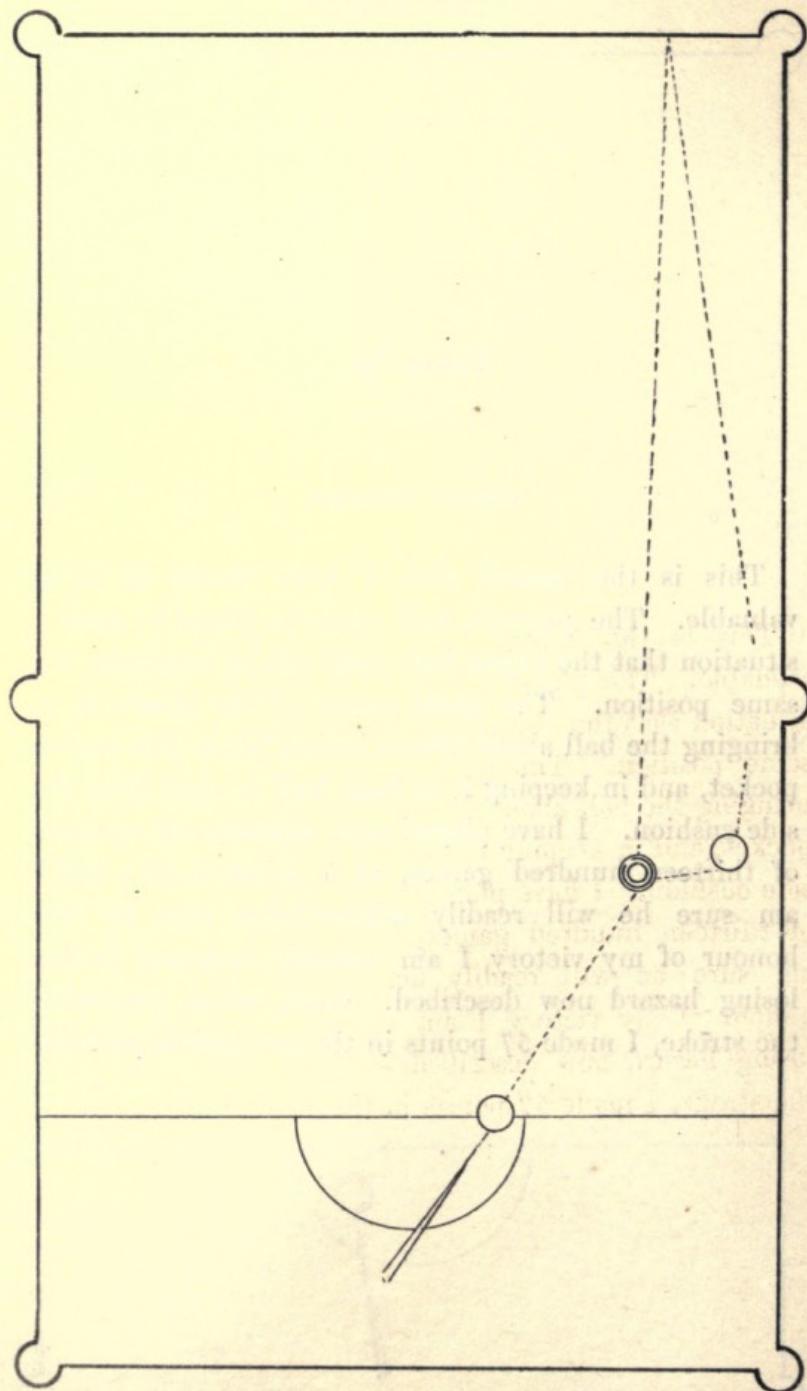


PLATE 53.

In this situation many persons play for a canon with just sufficient strength to carry the object ball to the right-hand corner pocket; but, by so doing, it frequently occurs that the ball thus placed becomes masked, and that the hazard intended falls to the lot of the opponent. The best way of playing the stroke is to make the canon with a strength that will bring the ball played upon down to the centre pocket; and, if the stroke be properly performed, the other ball will be carried to it, and a great break will follow.

PLATE 54

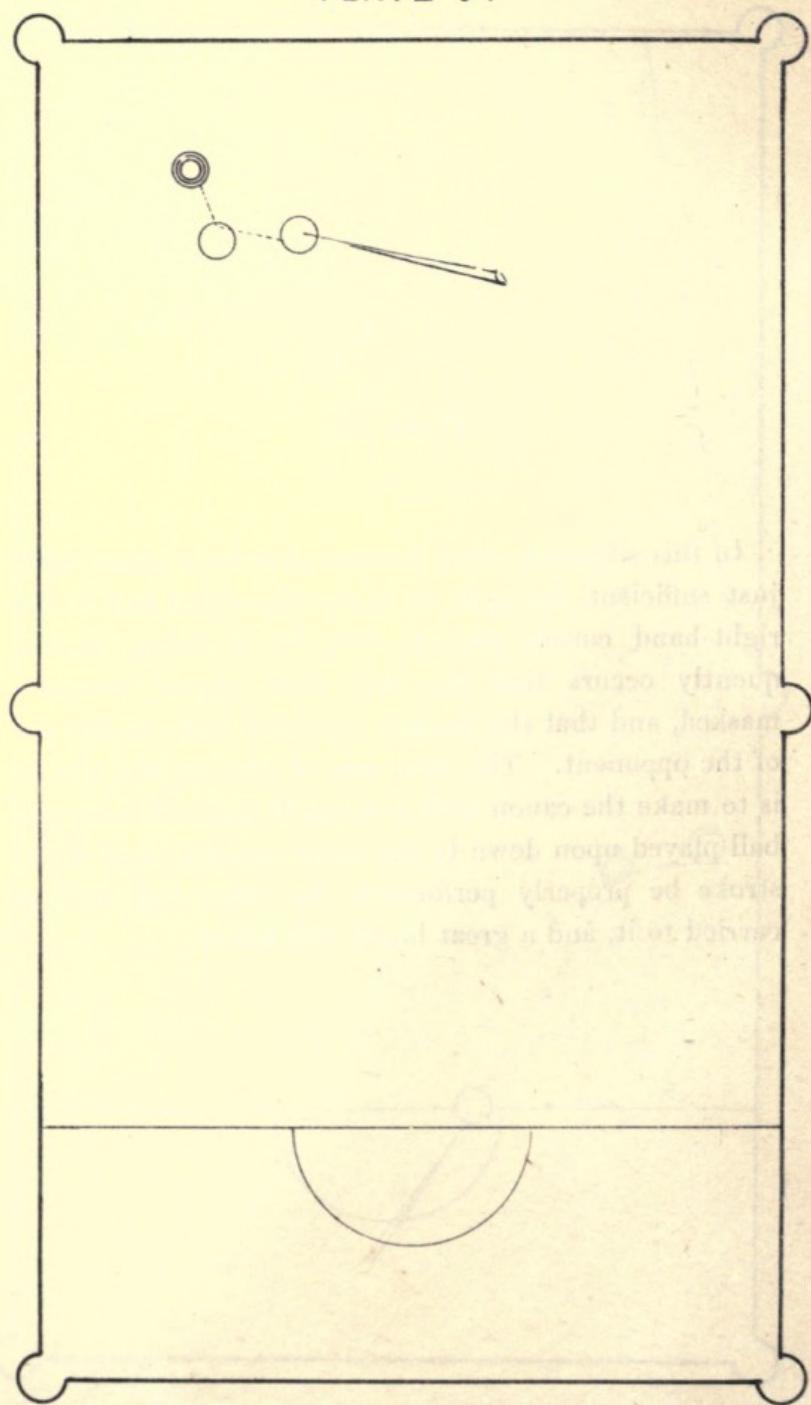
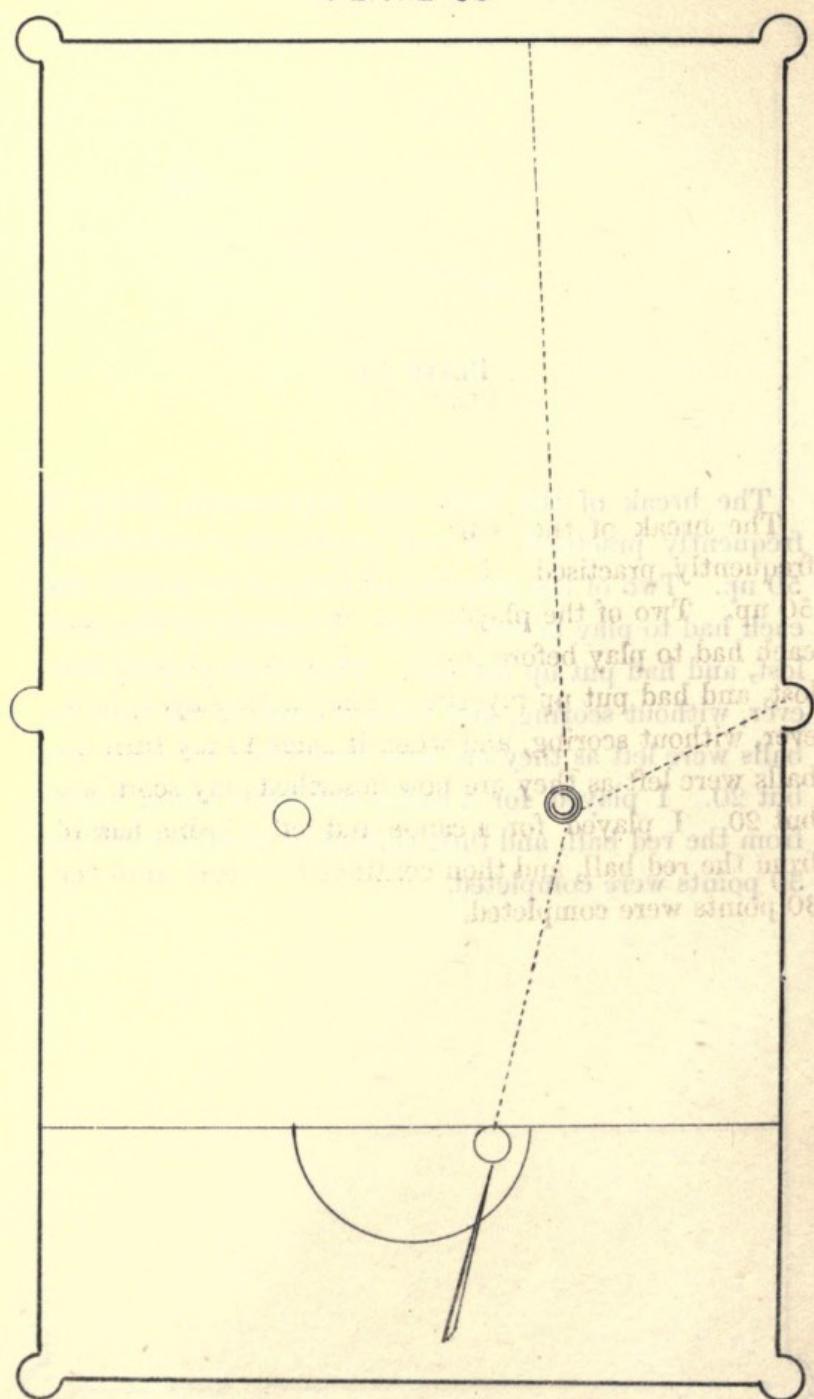


PLATE 54.

The break of the balls now represented should be frequently practised. I was playing in a sweepstakes, 50 up. Two of the players had reached 48 points, and each had to play before myself. I considered the game lost, and had put up my cue. They both played, however, without scoring, and when it came to my turn the balls were left as they are now described ; my score was but 20. I played for a canon and left a losing hazard from the red ball, and then continued to score until the 30 points were completed.

PLATE 55



PLAYERS

player's ball in hand. This is an excellent break, if properly played, and yields a good many points in playing for the greatest run. It requires two requirements:—1. the red ball is broken by the pocket; 2. the green ball is broken by the pocket. If either of these fails, it should be made, with a second or third shot, and the fast ball will be struck into the pocket at the end of the rail.

PLATE 55.

The break now described affords excellent practice. Upon a fast table and one with small pockets it will take a tolerable player to score 12 points; and yet, if each hazard can be played with good strengths, a great run may be accomplished. From balls similarly placed I scored 67 points, player's ball in hand.

Always it is to remember force and strategy determine, supporting or developing the progress of the ball on its way to the end given upon. Many players will show the learned this method of playing the ball for a long consideration. It is most important and worthy of notice. —The fundamental of the billiard-table is the Cognac tree. To arrest the progress of a player with half ball near already often very places over helpful.

PLATE 56

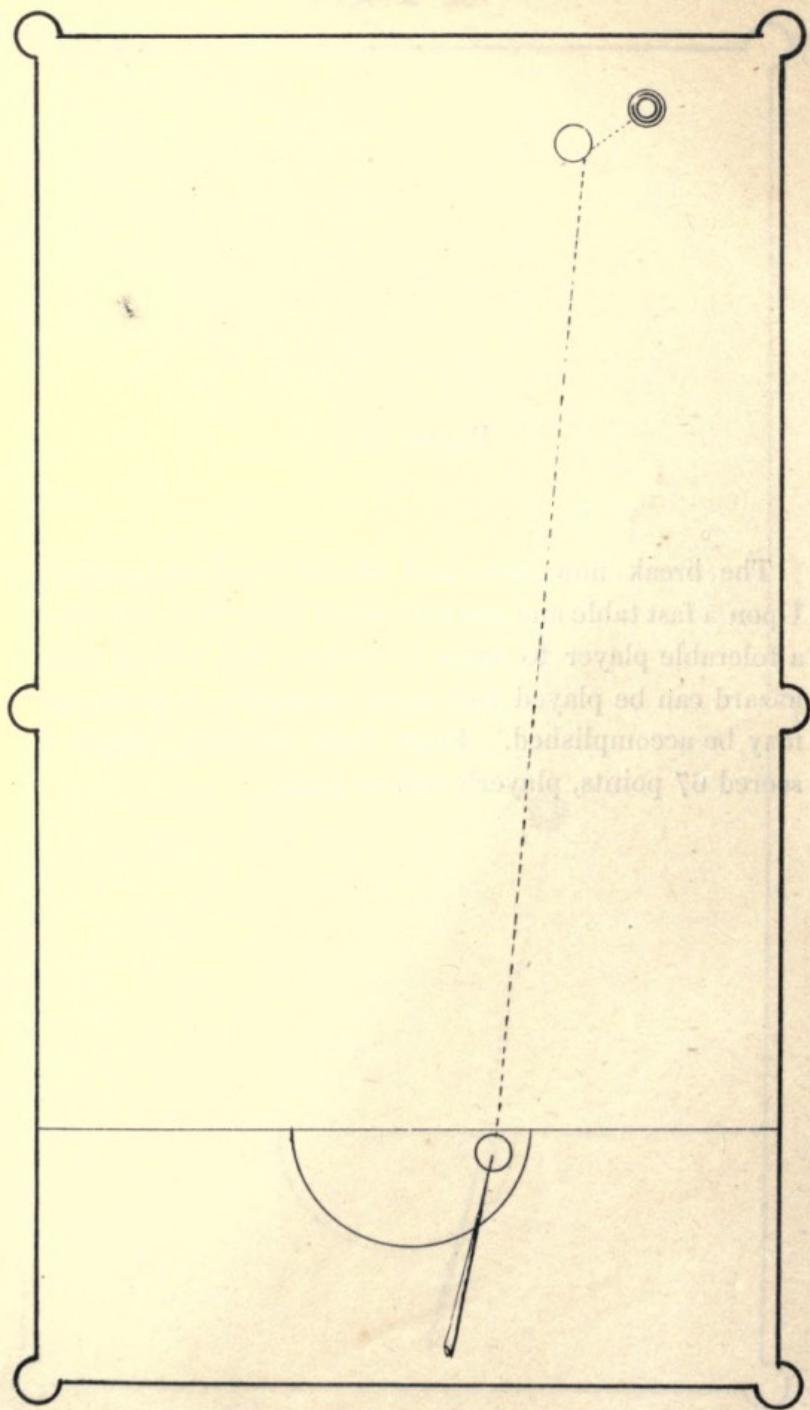


PLATE 56.

Player's ball in hand. This is an excellent break, and, if carefully played, will yield a great many points. In playing for this canon the greatest care and nicety of strength are required. If the red ball is holed by the first stroke the goodness of the break will, in all probability, be destroyed. The canon should be made with a strength so gentle that the red ball will be stationed over the pocket ; the white one will touch the top cushion and take a position near the spot. The red ball must then be holed, and the player's ball carried to a situation that will command both balls when the red be spotted. The balls, upon a fast table with a very fine cloth, are scarcely ever sufficiently true to admit of playing this canon with gentle strength and by hitting the played-with ball in the centre ; the proper way of playing it is to use greater force and to strike extremely low, suppressing or deadening the progress of the ball on its way to the ball played upon. Any professor will show the learner this method of playing the ball for a trifling consideration. It is most important and worthy of practice. The Superintendent of the Billiard Room at the Cocoa-Tree Club arrests the progress of the played-with ball more effectually than any player I ever beheld.

PLATE 57

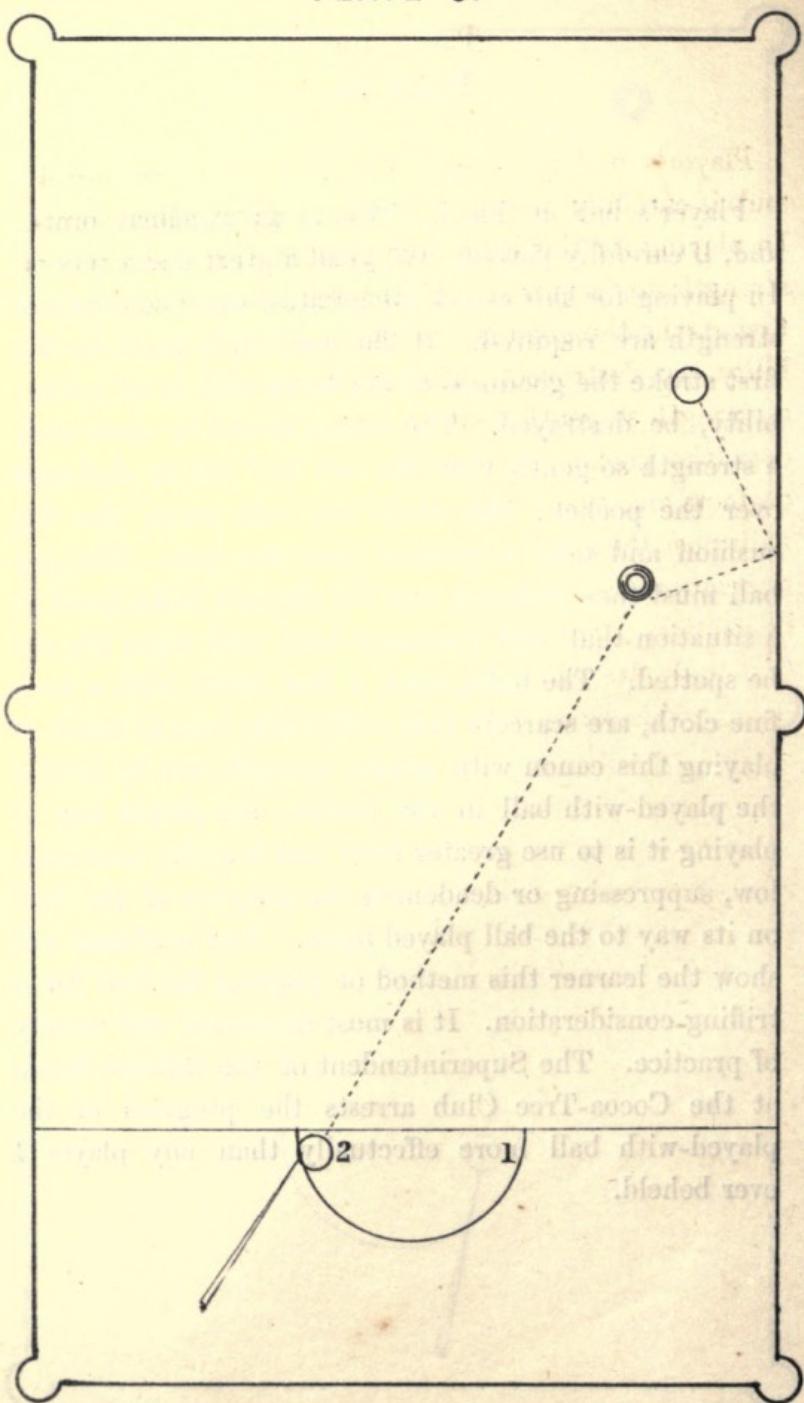


PLATE 57.

I have endeavoured to impress upon the minds of rising players the absolute necessity of canoning on the proper side of the ball; equally imperative and important is the placing of the played-with ball in order that the result of the canon or hazard may prove productive. If the ball, for the canon now exhibited, was placed at Fig. 1, the canon would be simple and its accomplishment certain, but the goodness of the break would be extremely doubtful. By placing the ball at Fig. 2, the canon, if gently played, will yield a promising break. The stroke, so played, may be considered difficult; but its attainment must be acquired ere a player can become formidable. In fact, whenever the ball is in hand, and a canon or hazard presented, it must be so placed that the contemplated score may yield another, and, in the words of Mr. Kentfield, "it is better to miss the score than to perform it in an improper manner."

PLATE 58

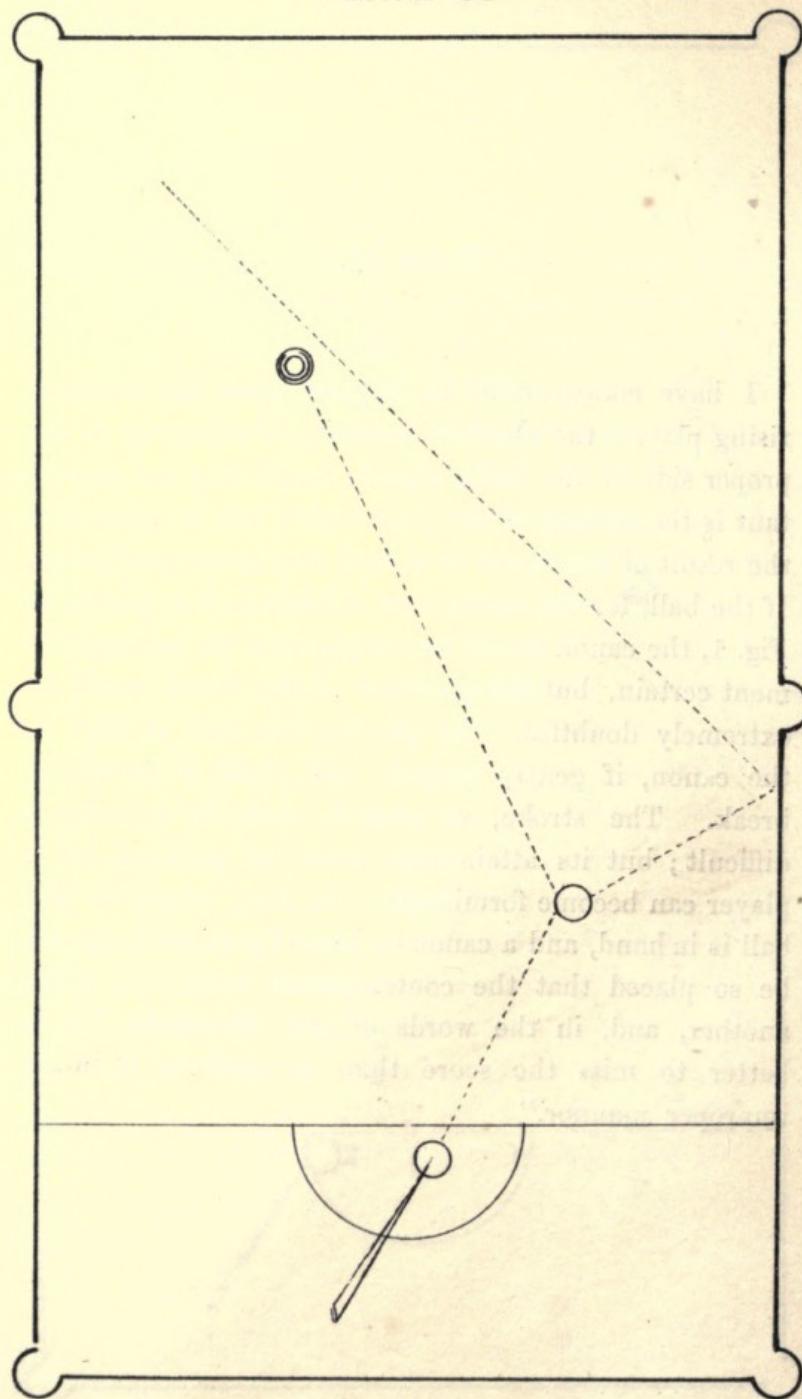
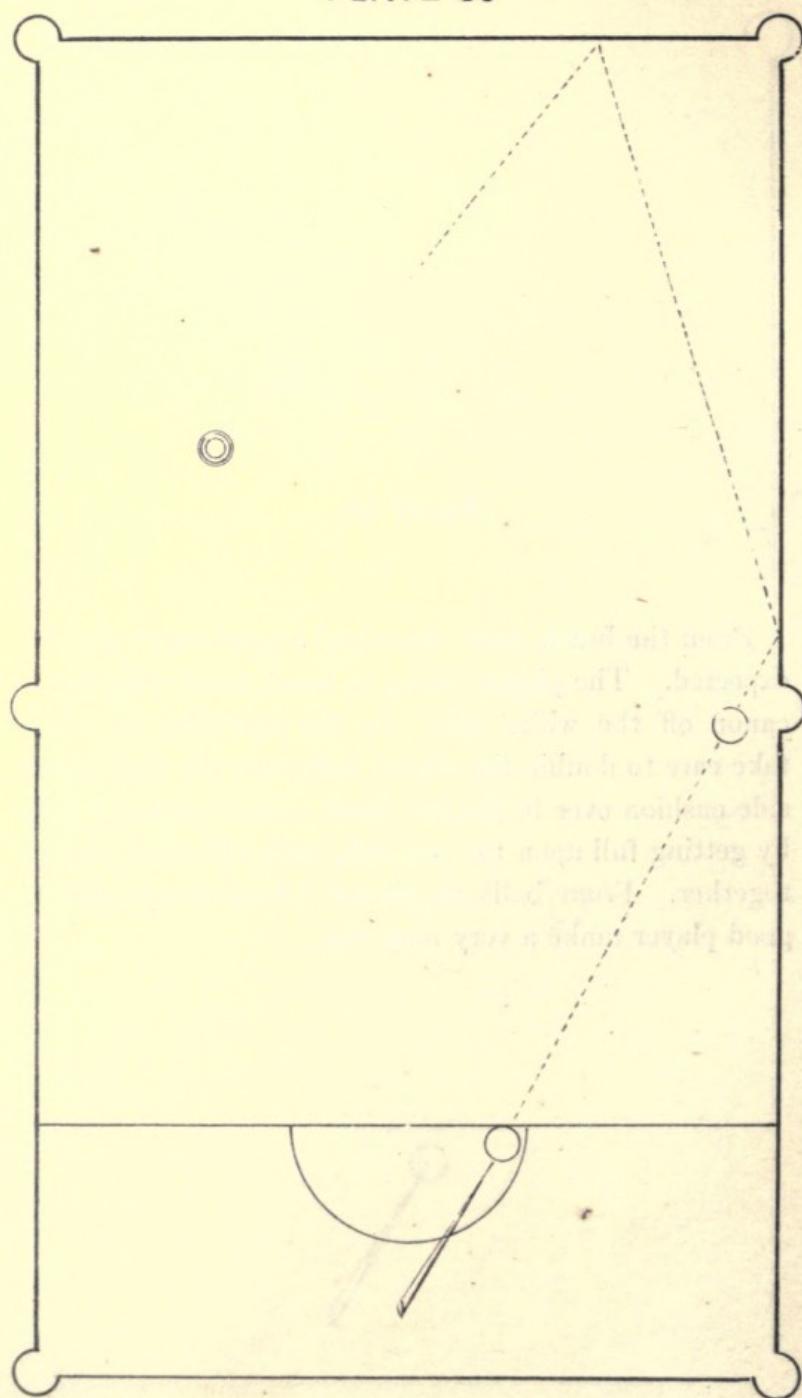


PLATE 58.

From the break now described a great score may be expected. The player, being in hand, must play for a canon off the white ball. In the execution he must take care to double the object ball from the right hand side cushion over to the left hand corner pocket; and, by getting full upon the red ball, both will come nearly together. From balls so placed I have always seen a good player make a very long run.

PLATE 59



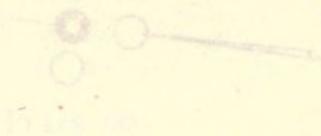


PLATE 59.

The player, being in hand, should walk his ball into the centre pocket off the white. The ball played upon, taking the side and top cushion, will finally rest near to the red, and a very good break will be presented. If the ball of the opponent were holed in the centre pocket no further score would be left. Converting a winning into a losing hazard is of the first importance, and strokes similar to the one now described should be frequently practised.

PLATE 60

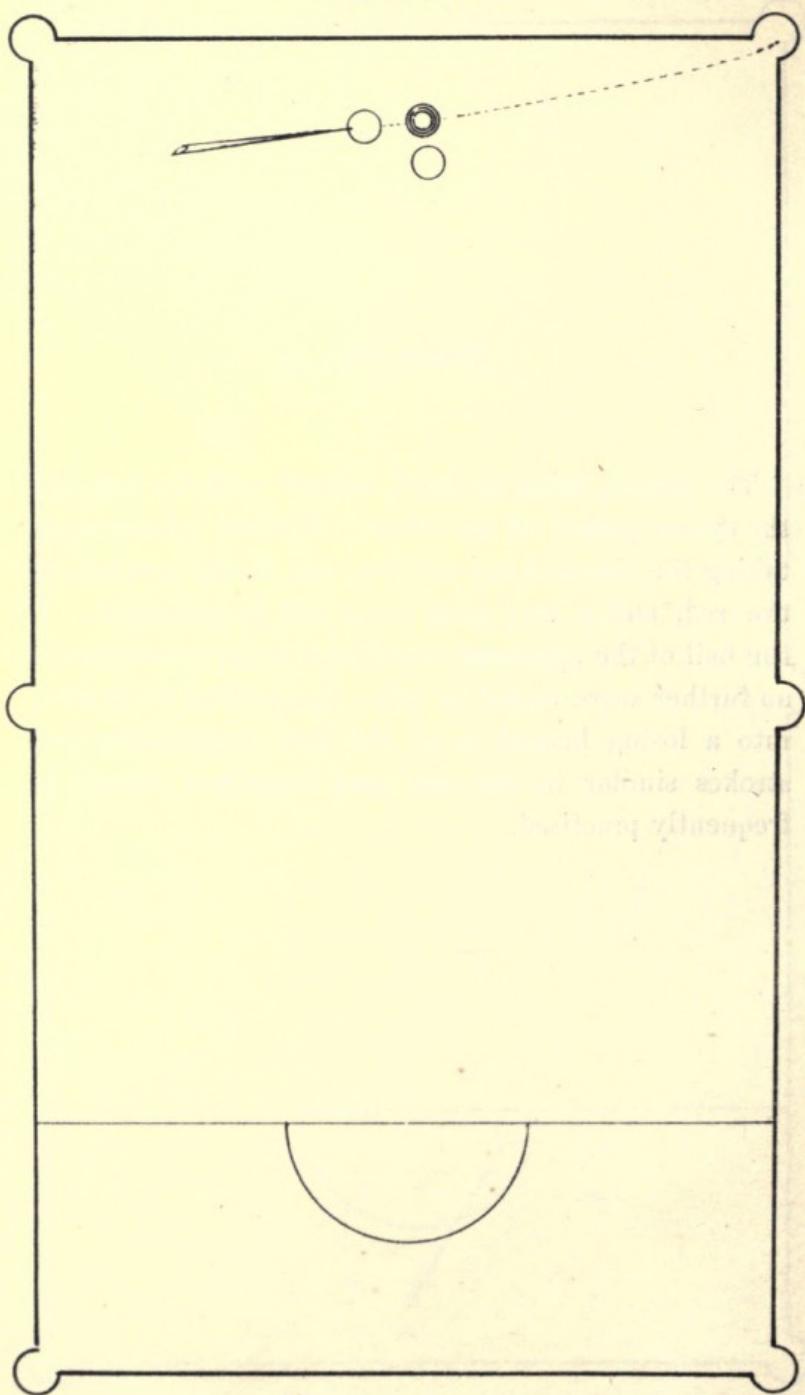


PLATE 60.

Player's ball commanding a straight hazard from the red. When a first-rate player backs himself to score a given number from the balls he invariably places them as now represented. The method of playing is to place the red ball in a position with the corner pocket so as to command a winning hazard for the next stroke, and making the canon so gently that the white ball should scarcely move. When the red ball has been holed and re-spotted a similar stroke for the other corner pocket will be presented, and I have seen this repeated ten or twelve times, the white ball not having moved more than an inch from its original position. Mr. Howse commenced the stroke by holeing the red, and twisting his own ball back about three inches; and I once saw him repeat this 22 times in succession! From balls so placed he made 104 points, and Mr. O'Conner, of Athlone, 148!

PLATE 61

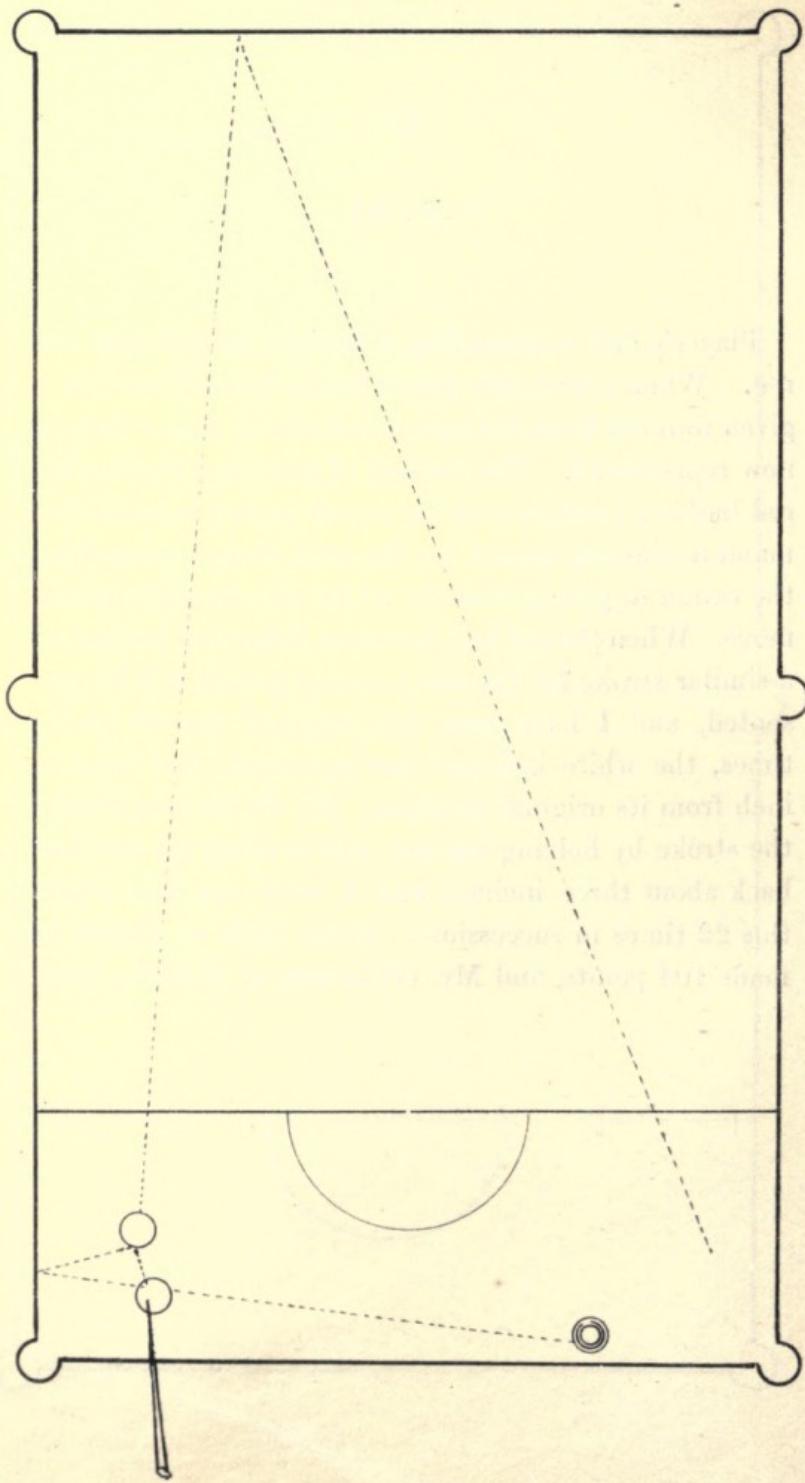


PLATE 61.

A great game was won from balls situated as now placed. Of the white balls the player's was that nearest to the bottom cushion. A canon was made from the ball near to the player's, and doubled from the top cushion towards the corner pocket in the baulk. The red ball was knocked in the same direction. Series of canons followed ; and afterwards a losing hazard from the red ball. That being made, and the object ball carried about a foot out of the baulk, left another profitable run.

PLATE 62

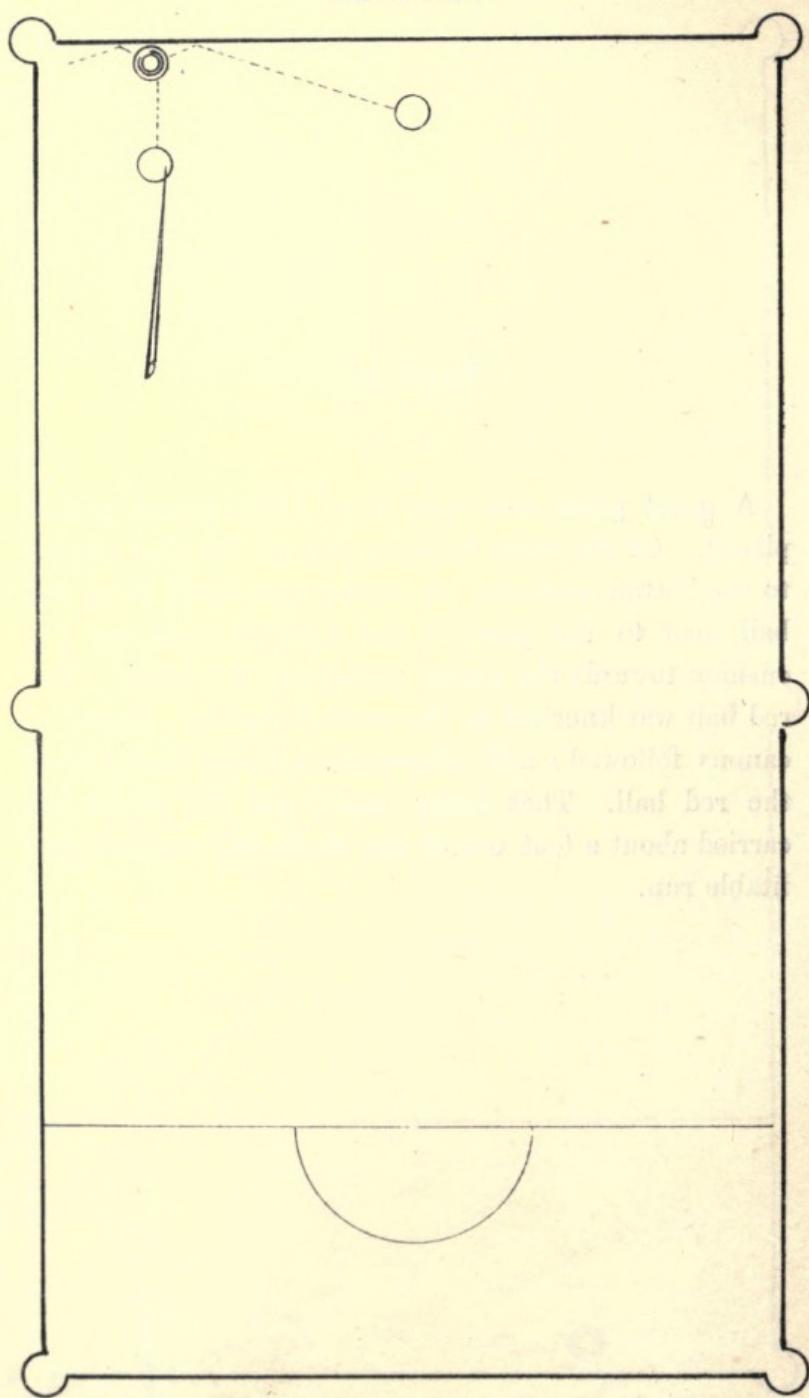


PLATE 62.

Great nicety of play is required in making the canon now described. If it is made in the ordinary way by striking the red a half ball, it will be carried to the side cushion and remain, most likely, safe. The red ball must be struck gently and finely on the right side; a strong side twist will carry the player's ball to that of the opponent. The red ball will be placed over the corner pocket, which, after being holed, will be spotted, and the three balls will then be nearly together. From balls so placed a very great run may be obtained: and I well recollect seeing them thus situated when Mr. Kentfield required many points to complete a game all but won by his opponent. He played the break in the manner described, and finished the game off the balls!

PLATE 63

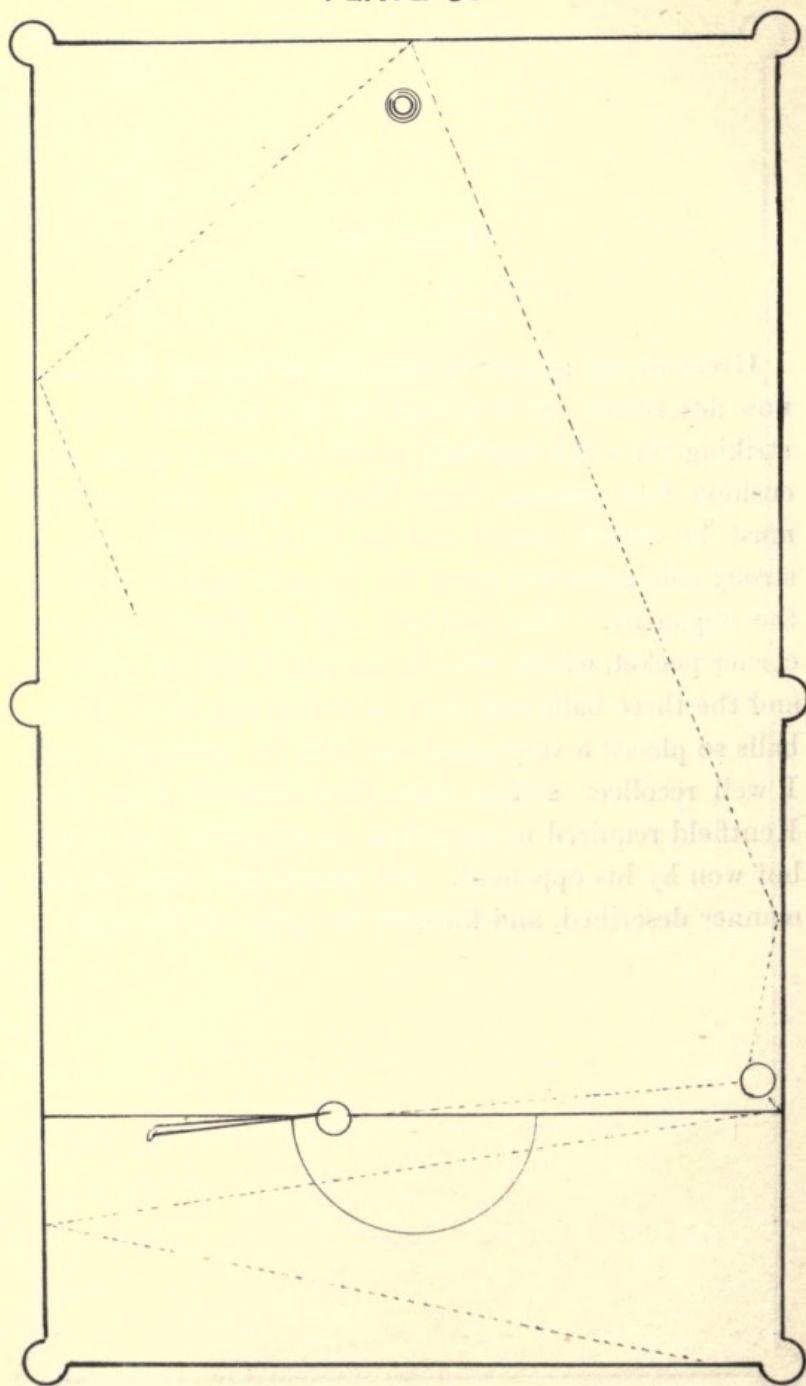


PLATE 63.

Player's ball in hand. The stroke now represented is one combining defence. I have seen very good hazard strikers play for this canon direct from the side cushion, placing the ball in that part of the half circle nearest to the lower cushion. The safest and best method of playing is to place the ball as shewn in the diagram : for, by hitting the object ball nearly full instead of fine, it will be doubled close to the lower cushion ; and if the canon be missed from the top cushion, the ball of the player, taking the direction indicated, will remain in a position that will command a losing hazard from the red ; and thus the opposing party will be under the necessity of playing at a ball greatly to his disadvantage. I shewed this stroke to two Gentlemen a few years since, and they have informed me that it has been the means of their winning several very important games. I played it also in the presence of Mr. Pook ; he admired it much, and acknowledged its vast importance.

PLATE 64

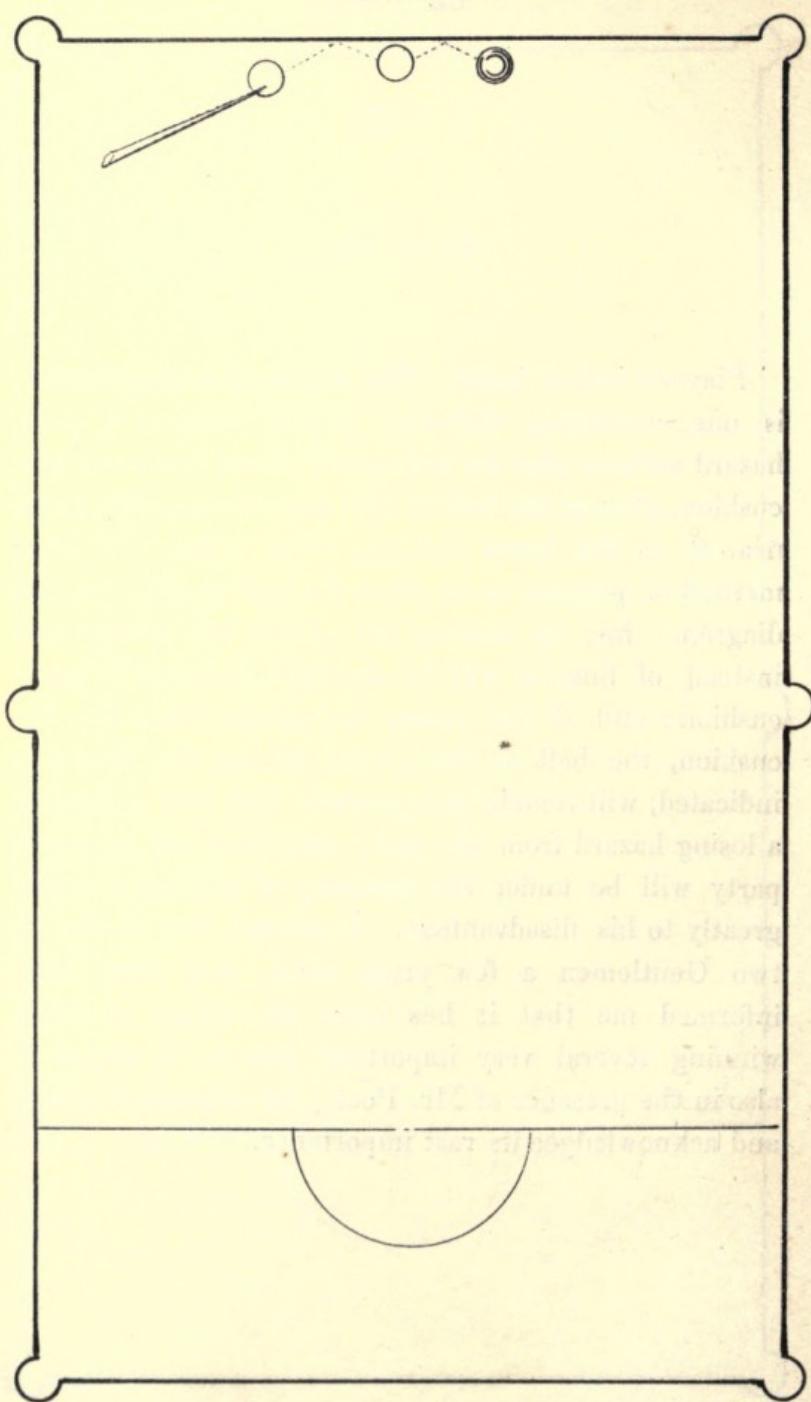


PLATE 64.

The balls are supposed to be nearly in a line, the player's furthest from the red. They were so situated when each party wanted but one to win the game. The player observed he could not score. Mr. Kentfield replied that the canon was a certainty. The player attempted it and failed. After the game had been won by his opponent Mr. Kentfield re-placed the balls, and he continued to make the canon as long as he was requested to do so. The player should strike his ball upon the right side, hitting the cushion about three inches from the object ball, it will then take the direction described.

PLATE 65

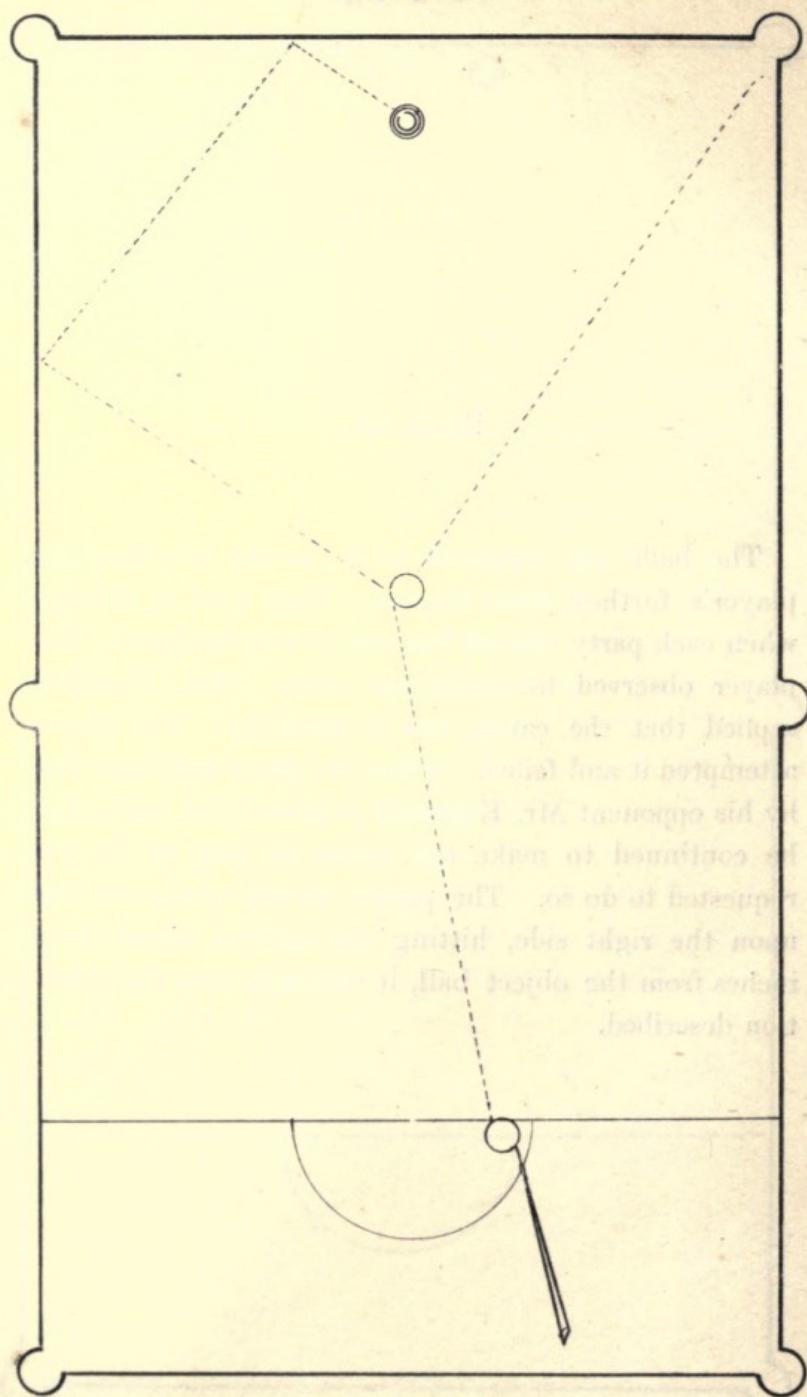


PLATE 65.

Player's ball in hand. The correct method of playing this break is as shewn in the diagram. If the canon be properly made a promising break will succeed, and if it have been missed the opponent's ball will be placed so near to the side cushion that the chances would be against a score. If Mr. Kentfield required 15 or 20 points to complete a game he would not desire a better break than the one now represented.

PLATE 66

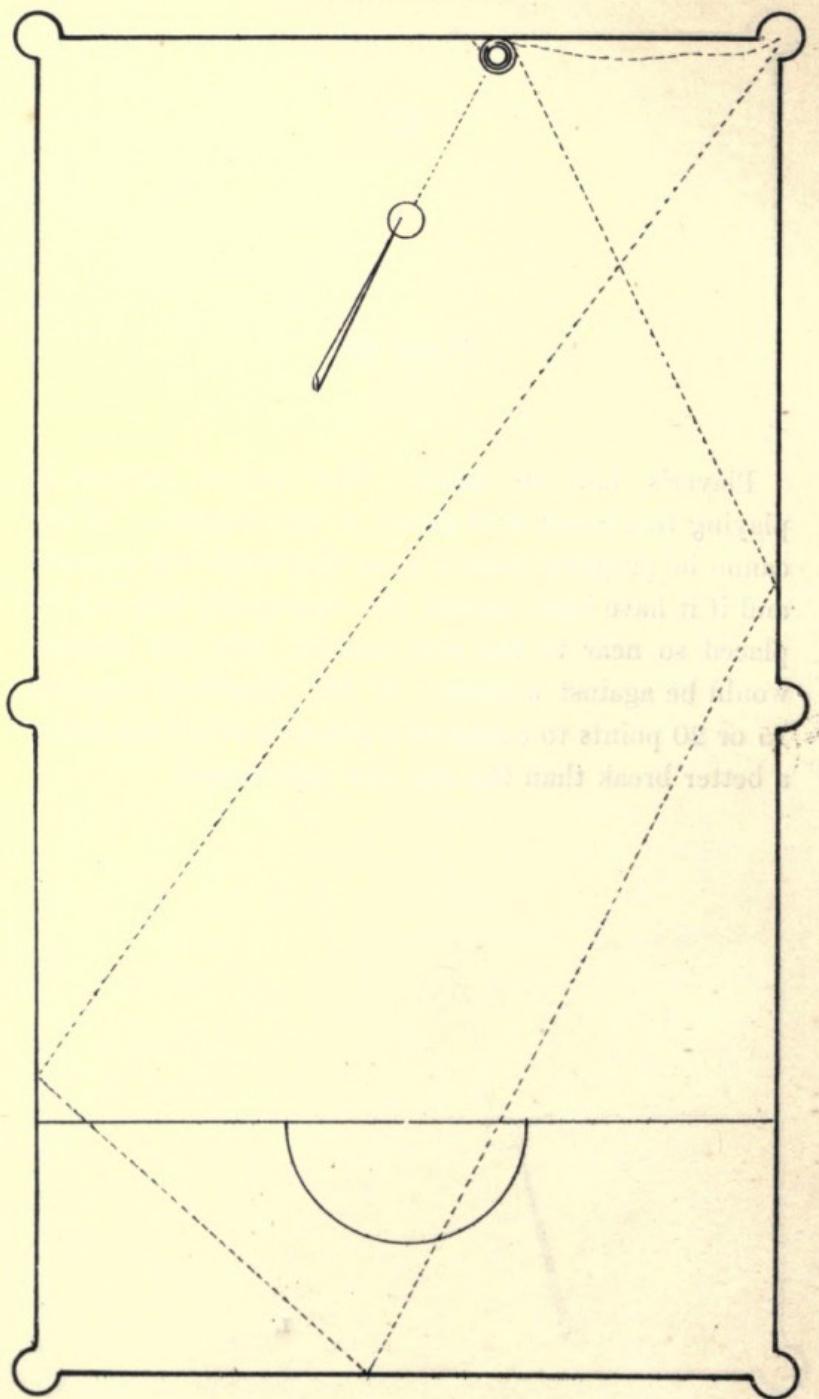


PLATE 66.

The extraordinary power of the side-twist is shewn to very great advantage in the stroke now represented. It is possible, through its agency, to put both the balls into the right hand corner pocket. A game was once very much against me, when the balls appeared as they are now described. I holed my own ball in the right hand corner pocket, and brought the red ball within four inches of it; again making from the red ball thus placed a losing hazard, I succeeded in following it up by six others, and won a game off the balls when they had all the appearance of being perfectly safe.

PLATE 67

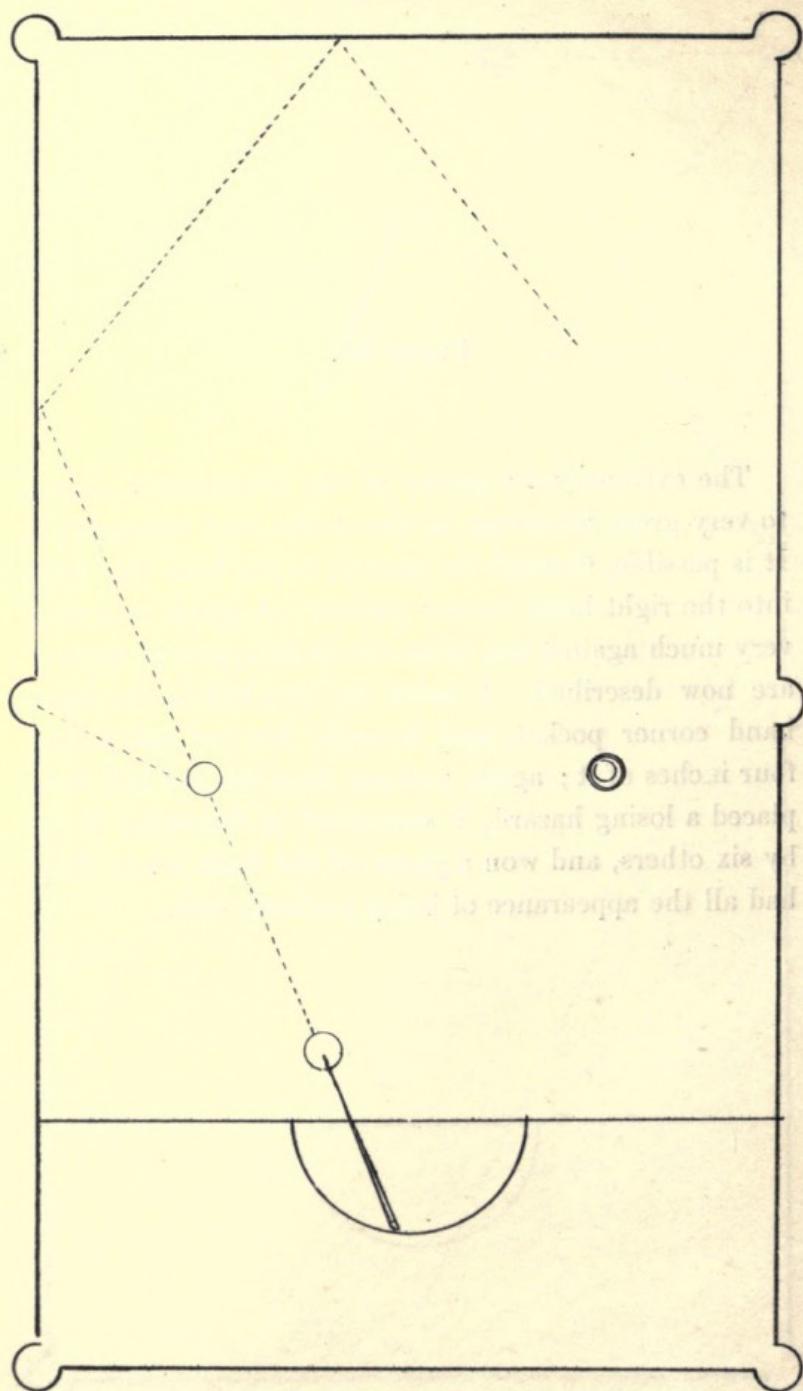


PLATE 67.

The balls were thus placed when I wanted 28 points to complete the game. I walked my own ball into the centre pocket off the white. The red then presented my favourite losing hazard. I made the 28 points and had a promising break remainuing.

PLATE 68

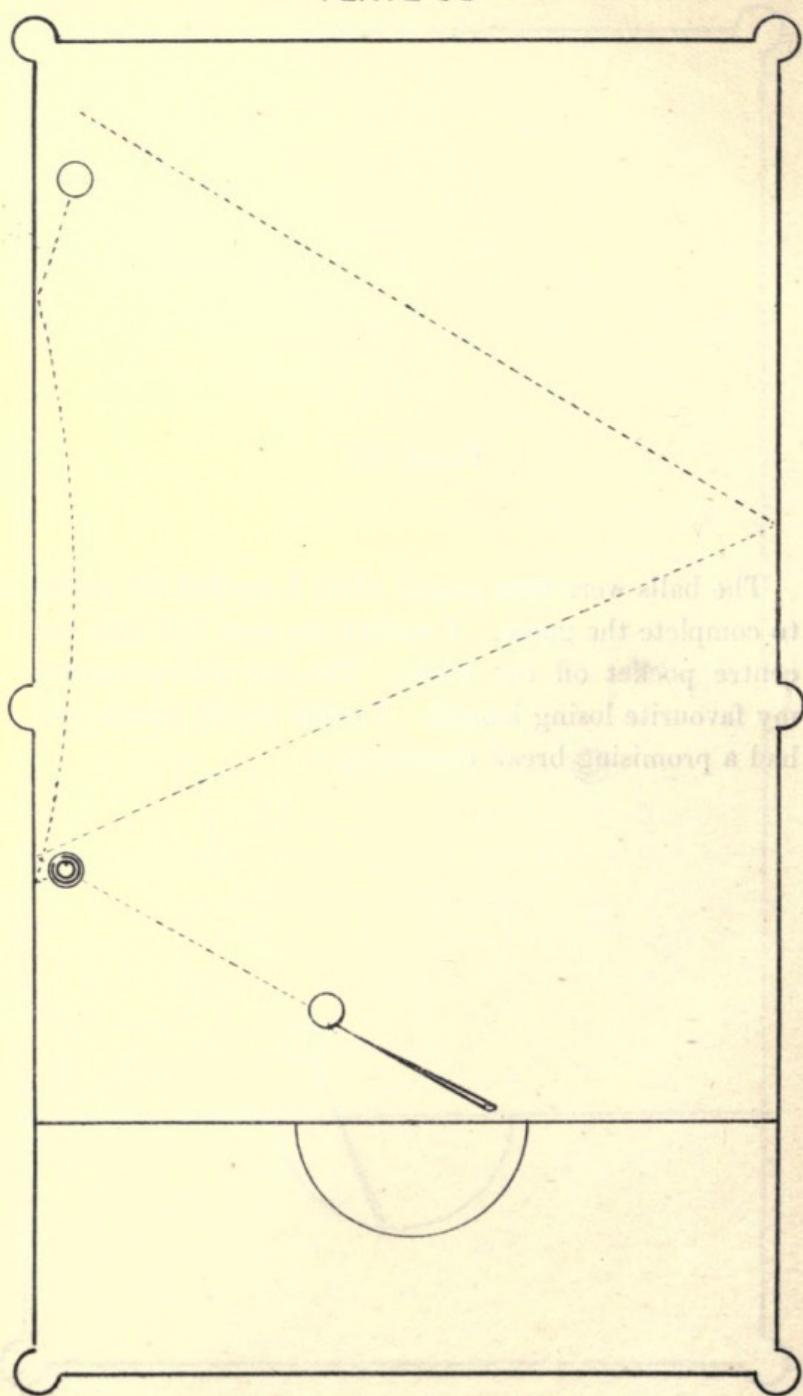


PLATE 68.

On one occasion my opponent was 23, and I 6, the game being 24. From balls situated as they are now represented the only chance of a successful run was to make a canon with a strong counter side stroke. This enabled me, by playing nearly full upon the red ball, to double it towards the position of the white. I succeeded in making the canon, and obtained a break of the balls that insured the winning of the game.

A difference of opinion exists with respect to the proper side of striking the played-with ball. Some incline to the left side; others to the right. The left side, giving the ball an earlier disposition to return to the cushion, may induce it to do so ere it has passed the centre pocket, the shoulder of which cushion might prevent the accomplishment of the stroke. Nevertheless, I adhere to the left side, for the ball thus struck will frequently canon from the top cushion.

PLATE 69

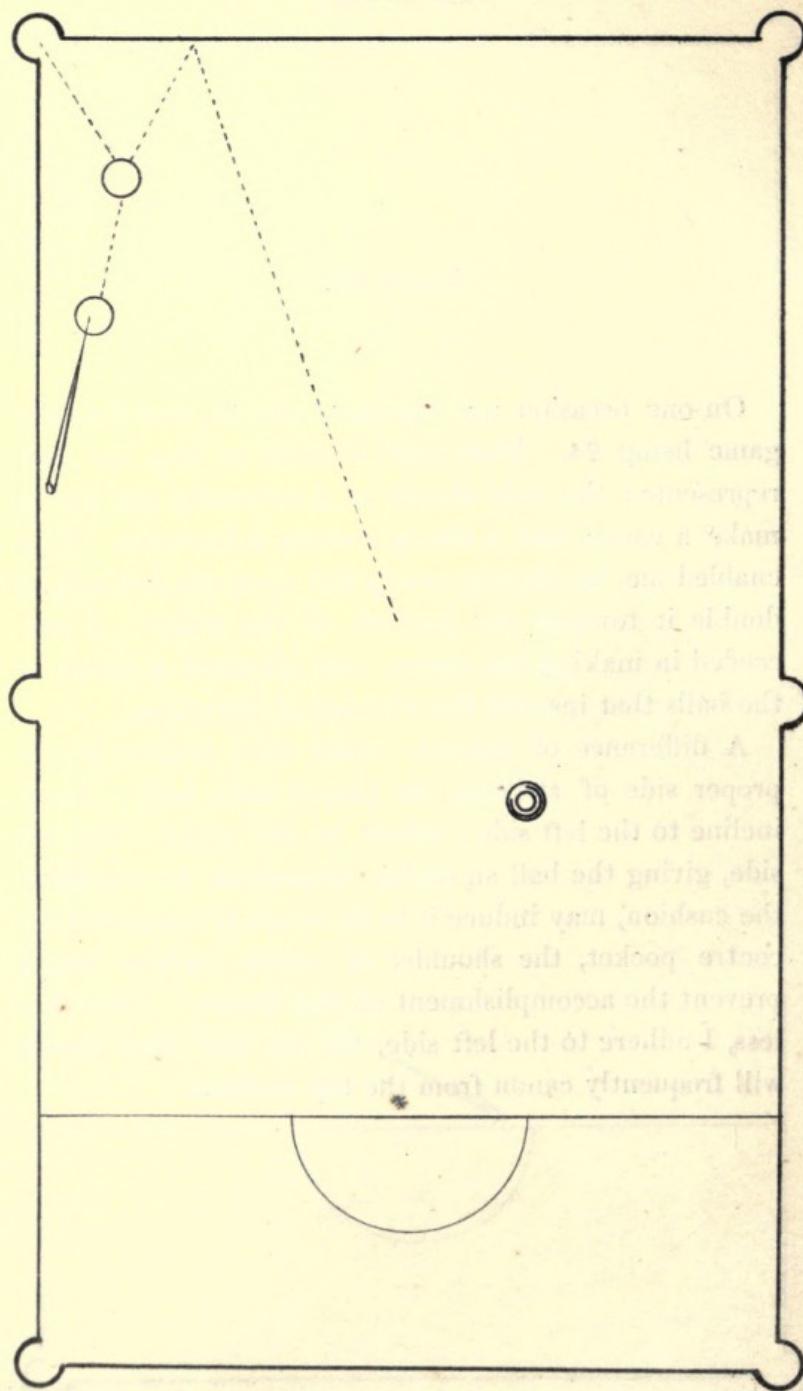


PLATE 69.

The precision with which balls are hit when in the baulk renders the holeing of the opponent's ball almost useless ; therefore, from a proceeding of this kind, a long run is seldom obtained. As the balls are now placed the proper method for the player to pursue, if the game were backward, would be to walk his own ball into the corner pocket off the white. These strokes are rather difficult, and require a great deal of practice ; but a player cannot expect to become formidable until he can convert, when required, a winning into a losing hazard. Many players make the stroke by hitting the ball in the centre and high, but I invariably endeavour to widen the pocket by striking my ball upon the side.



PLATE 70

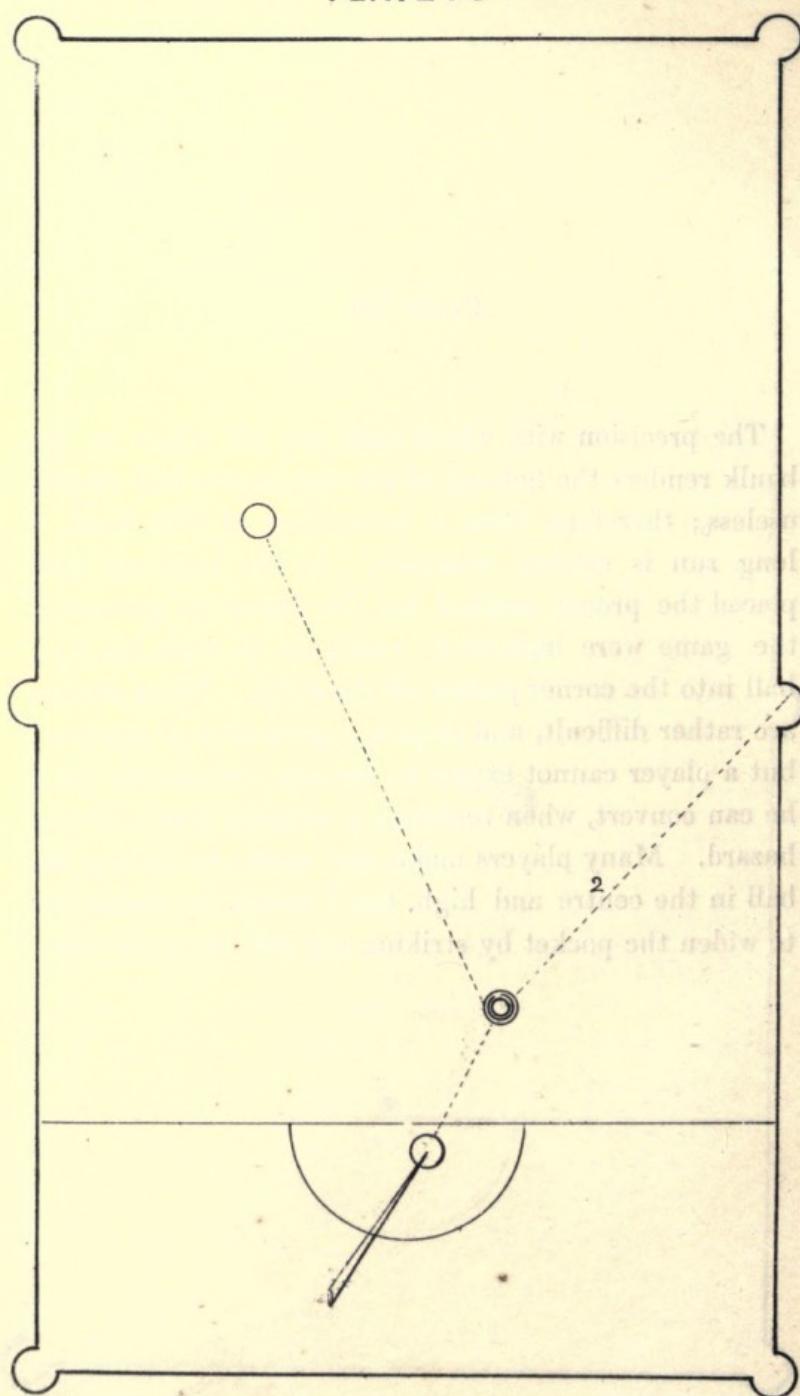


PLATE 70.

The white and the red ball were thus placed when the player required but seven points to complete the game. He placed his ball as shewn in the diagram, and played to hole the red ball and canon ; grasping at 5 he missed both. Had he been accustomed to look beyond the immediate score presented he would have seen, being in hand, that he could have placed his ball to have commanded a straight winning hazard in the centre pocket ; and, by walking his ball to the position marked 2, that, on the red ball being spotted, he would have had before him a canon that would in all probability have led to the completion of the game. Billiards, like whist, is a game of observation ; and, like the latter, should be played according to the score.

PLATE 71

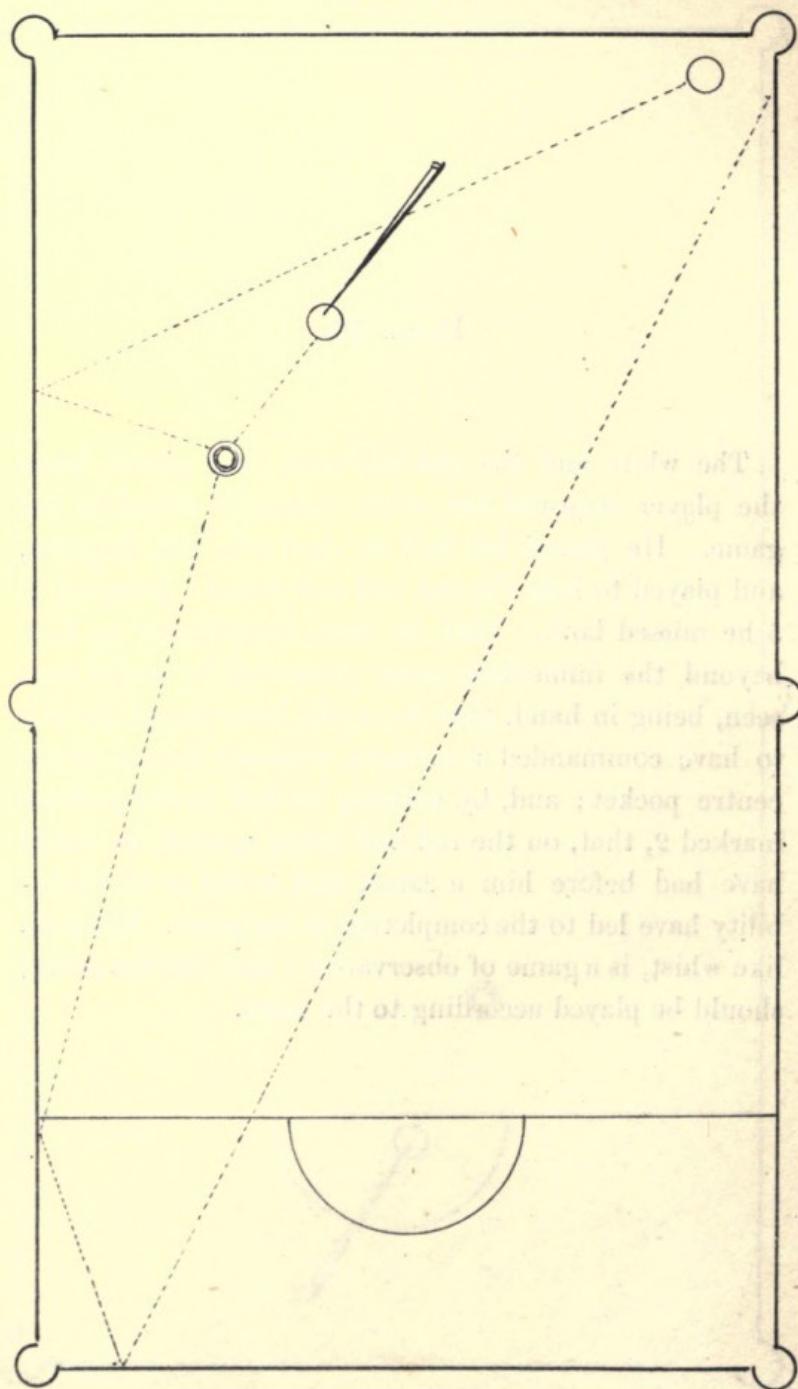


PLATE 71.

If 15 or 20 points were wanted to complete the game, the canon now described would most probably lead to its completion. The player must strike his ball upon the right side, and play with strength just sufficient to carry the red ball up to the corner pocket ; and if in making the canon the opponent's ball be not put into the pocket near to which it rests, the three balls will be nearly together, and offer, in all probability, a most advantageous break.

PLATE 72

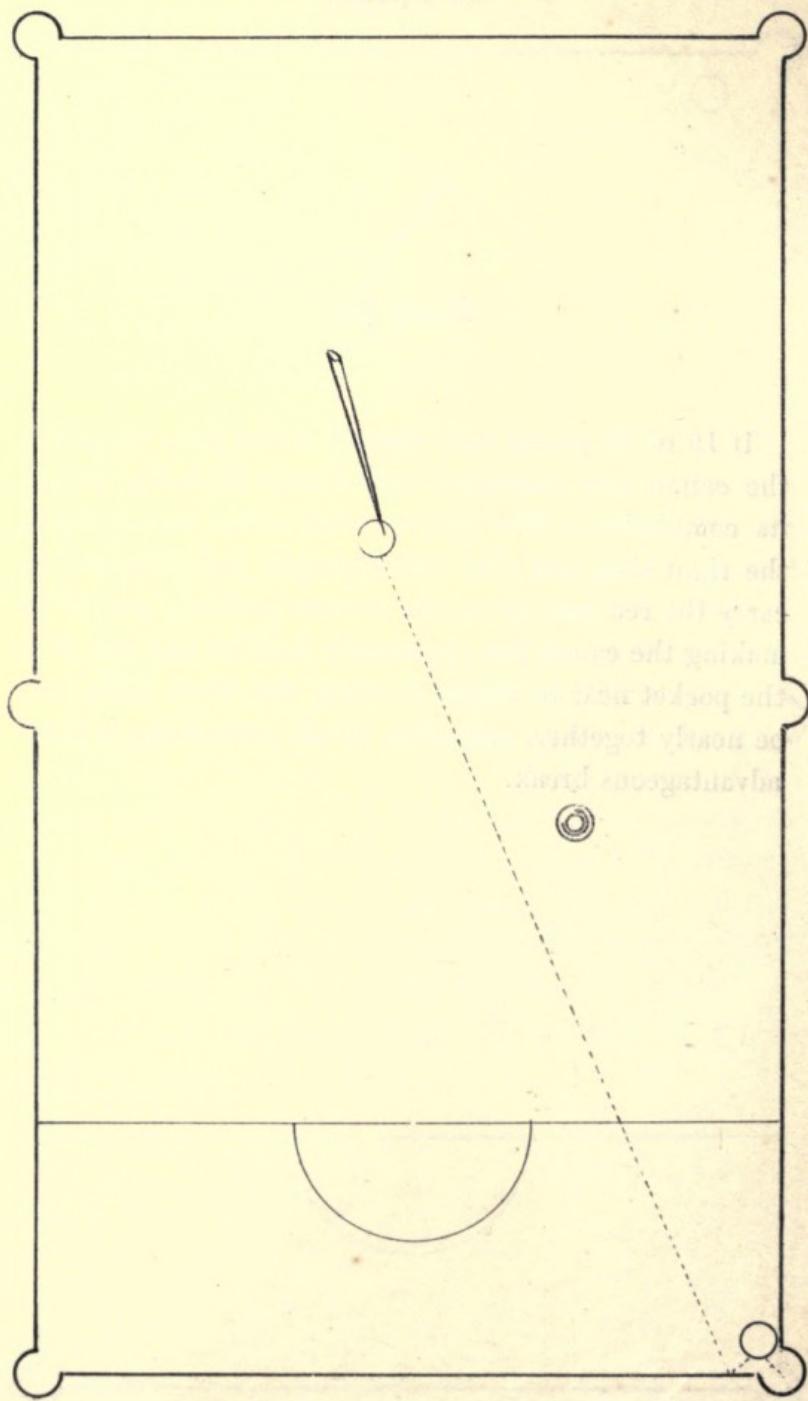
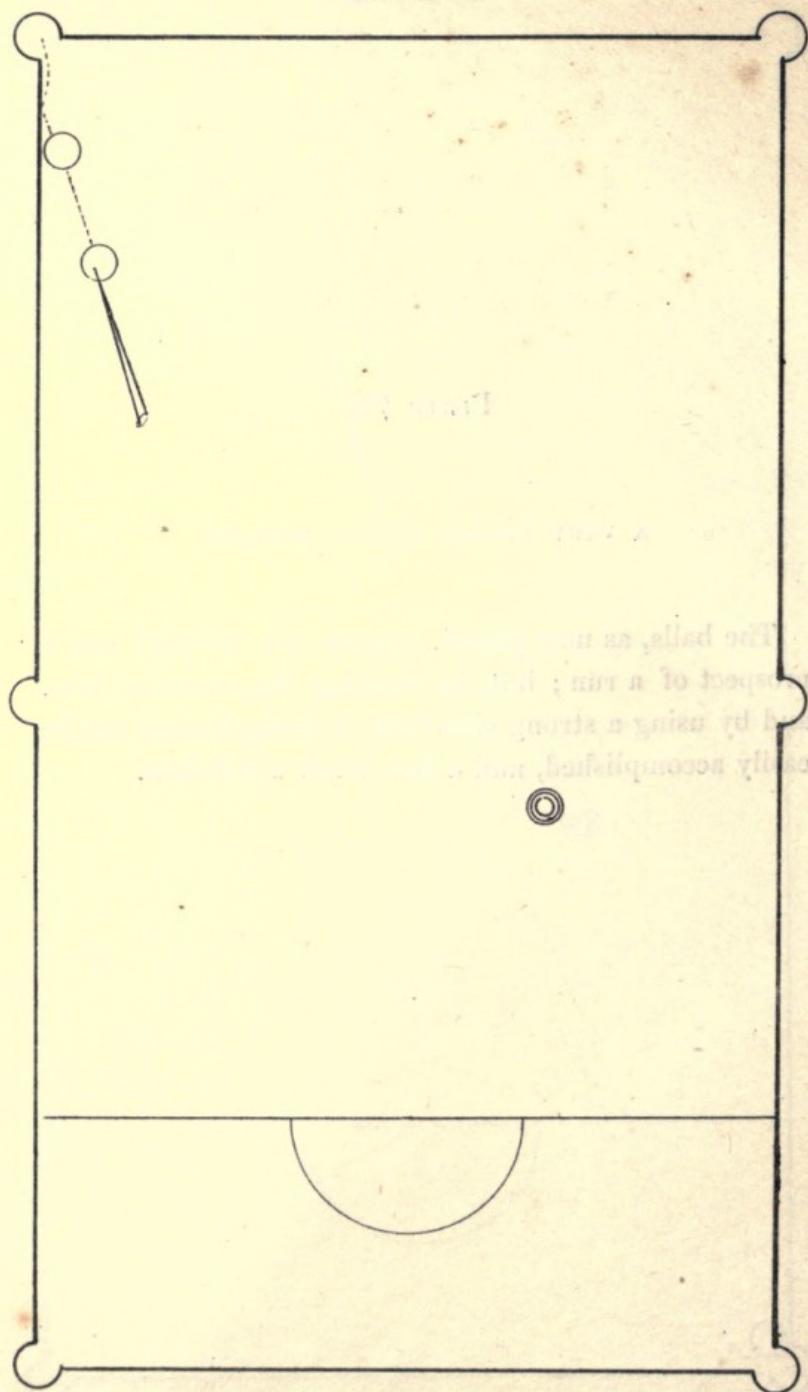


PLATE 72.

A VERY USEFUL LOSING HAZARD.

The balls, as now placed, appear not to hold out a prospect of a run ; but, by striking the cushion first, and by using a strong side-twist, a losing hazard can be easily accomplished, and a fine break will follow.

PLATE 73



The balls as now placed would, to a young player, appear to be safe; and yet the holeing of the ball played with in the corner pocket would be a certainty to any one capable of hitting the ball on its left side. The advantages to be derived from making a losing hazard from the white ball are evident enough, and the break left ought to produce a long score.

PLATE 74

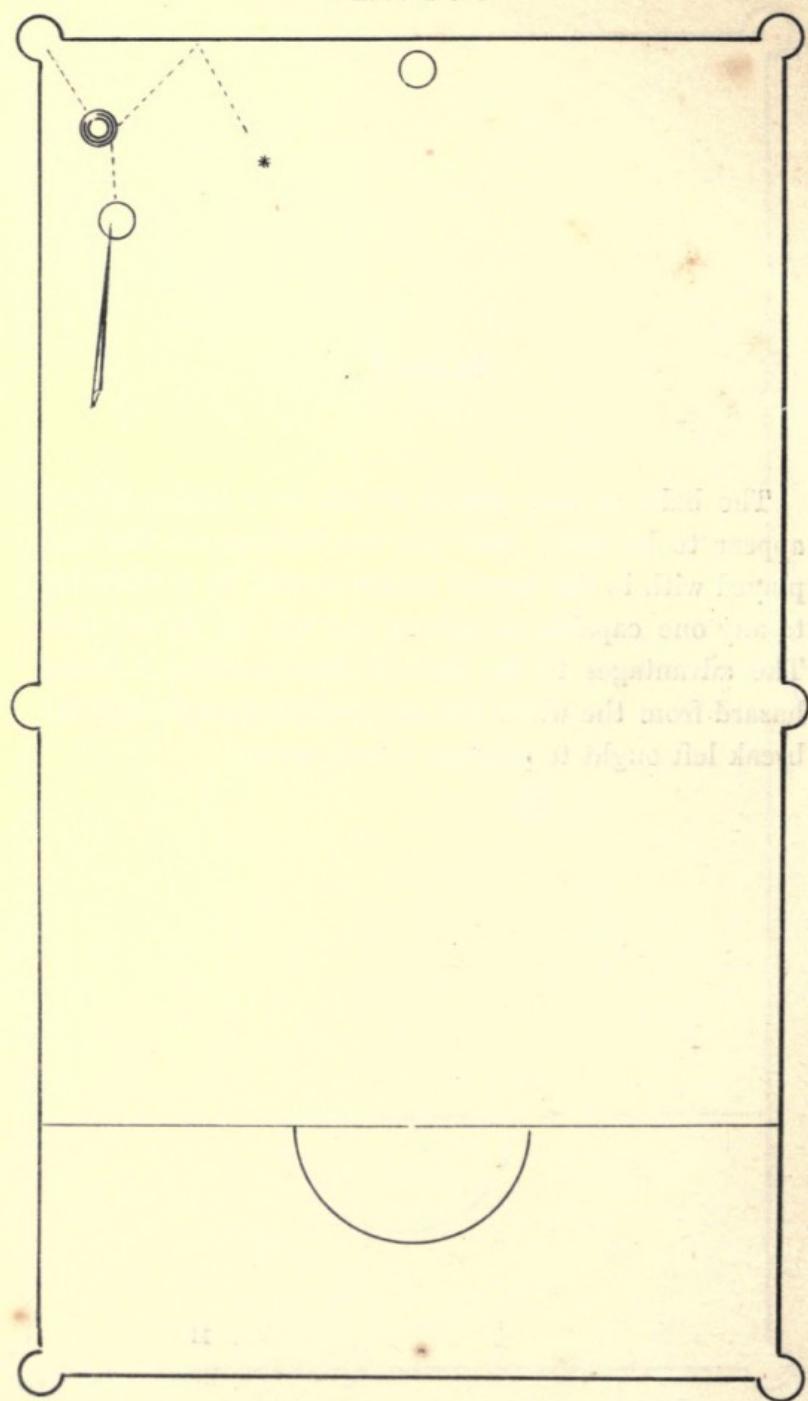


PLATE 74.

The balls were thus placed when the player wanted but 8 points to complete the game. He played for 5, to hole the red ball and canon, made them, and then found the balls perfectly safe. The person alluded to had played at billiards for 20 years, and yet his knowledge of the game was so limited he could not perceive that, by only putting in the red and taking his own ball to the position marked thus *, a break would have followed the spotting of the red ball that must have yielded the number of points required.

PLATE 75

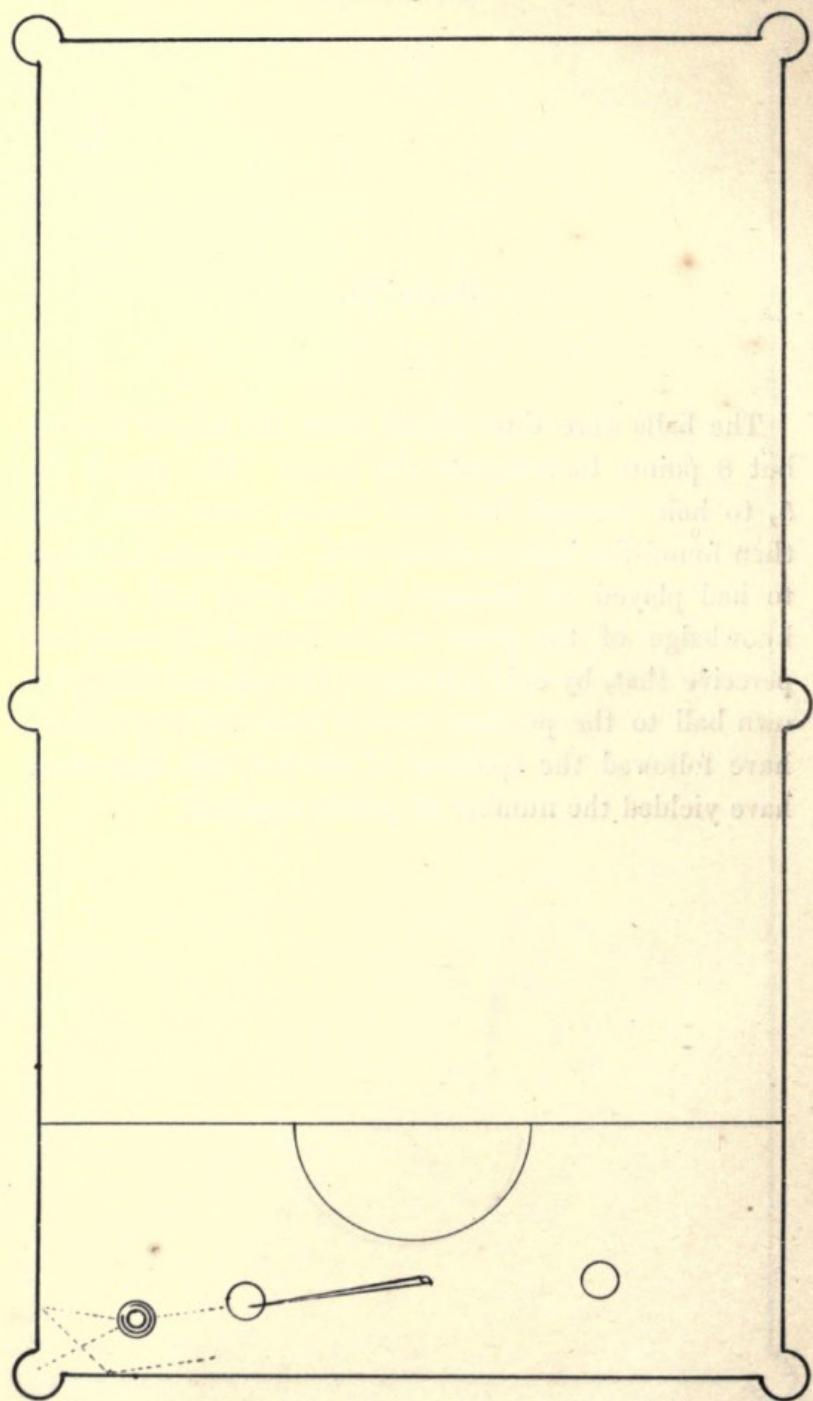


PLATE 75.

The advantage to be derived from placing the ball played with, after scoring, in a situation that will command another score has been frequently alluded to, and the diagram now under notice will prove an illustration. If the red ball was holed without the use of the side stroke it would be very doubtful that another hazard could be obtained; but, by striking the ball upon its left side, it will return from the side cushion to the lower one, and leave the player a certain losing hazard from the white ball, from which, if made with proper strength, a great score might be expected. The stroke is very simple, and merely requires that the ball played with should be struck upon its side.

PLATE 76

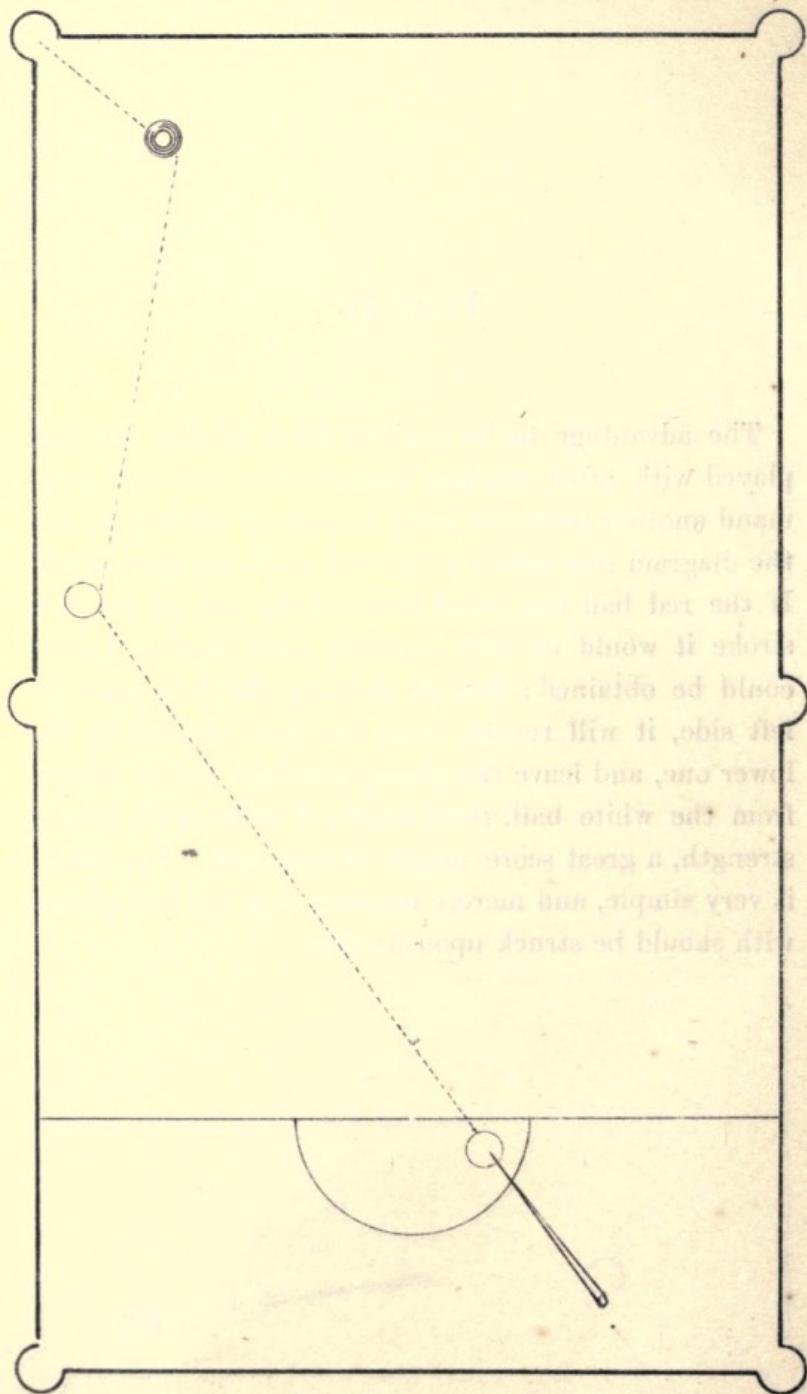


PLATE 76.

The difference between a correctly executed stroke and one that is badly played is manifested in the annexed diagram, and it is inserted that the necessity and advantage of making a canon on the proper side of the ball may be once more brought to the recollection of the learner. I have seen hundreds of games lost by the canon being made full upon the red ball when the player required but 5 points to complete the score. Had the red ball been struck on the side with gentle strength it would have been driven to the mouth of the corner pocket, and have left another certain hazard. Let me again impress upon the recollection of the player that a canon had better be missed than not executed on the proper side of the ball.

Since writing the above remarks I saw, a few days since, a Gentleman, supposed to be by Mr. Kentfield one of the best amateur players, lose a game, when he required but 4 points to complete it, by getting full upon the red ball.

PLATE 77

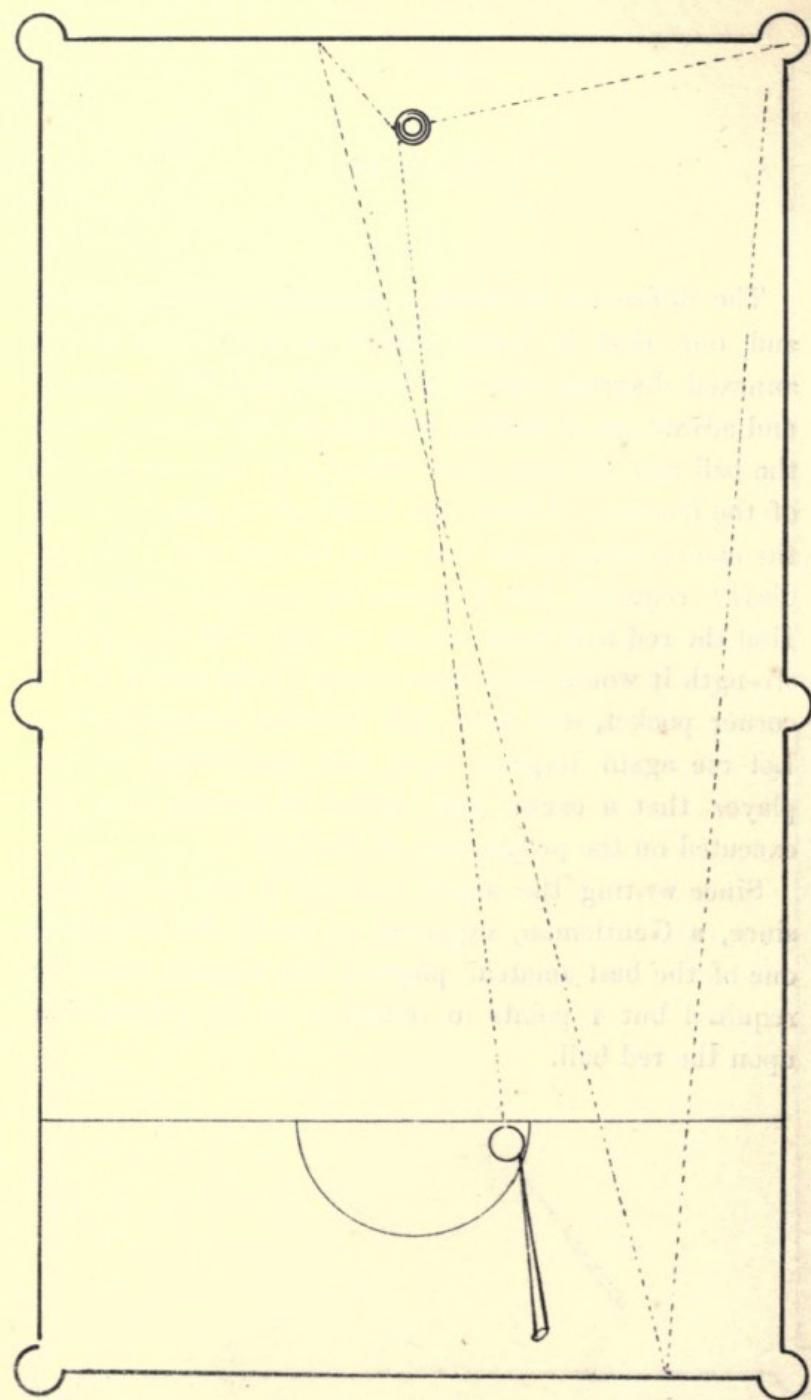


PLATE 77.

Extraordinary strokes have frequently been accidentally discovered. Two Gentlemen were playing at Mr. Bedford's. The red ball was on the spot. The player placed his ball at the extremity of the baulk circle and played to twist into the left hand corner pocket. He was an indifferent player and struck his ball untruly; and, instead of hitting the red ball nearly full to make the contemplated twist, he cut the red ball into the opposite corner pocket, and, through the medium of an unintentional strong side stroke, placed the played-with ball into the same pocket. I afterwards played for the stroke and made it.

PLATE 78

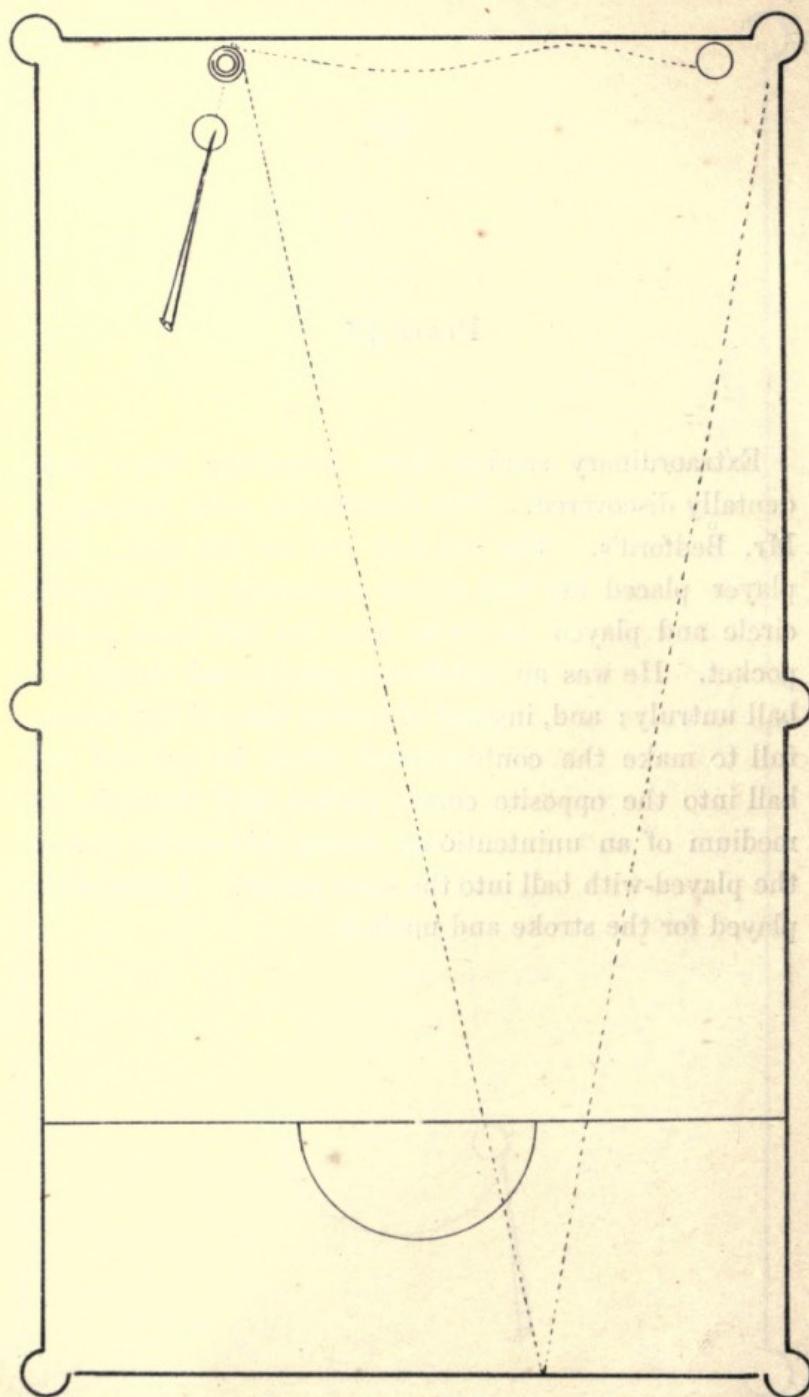


PLATE 78.

It would be folly to play for this extraordinary canon in the general game, but in the game of one pocket to five it might, on a slow table, be attempted. The object of its notice is to show the wonderful power of the side stroke, producing, in this instance, an effect, in all probability, never witnessed by any one contemplating this diagram ; and which becomes almost marvellous, as the played-with ball striking the cushion to the left of the ball played upon, it is scarcely credible that it can afterwards take the direction indicated. I have frequently seen the canon thus made by Mr. George Howse.

PLATE 79

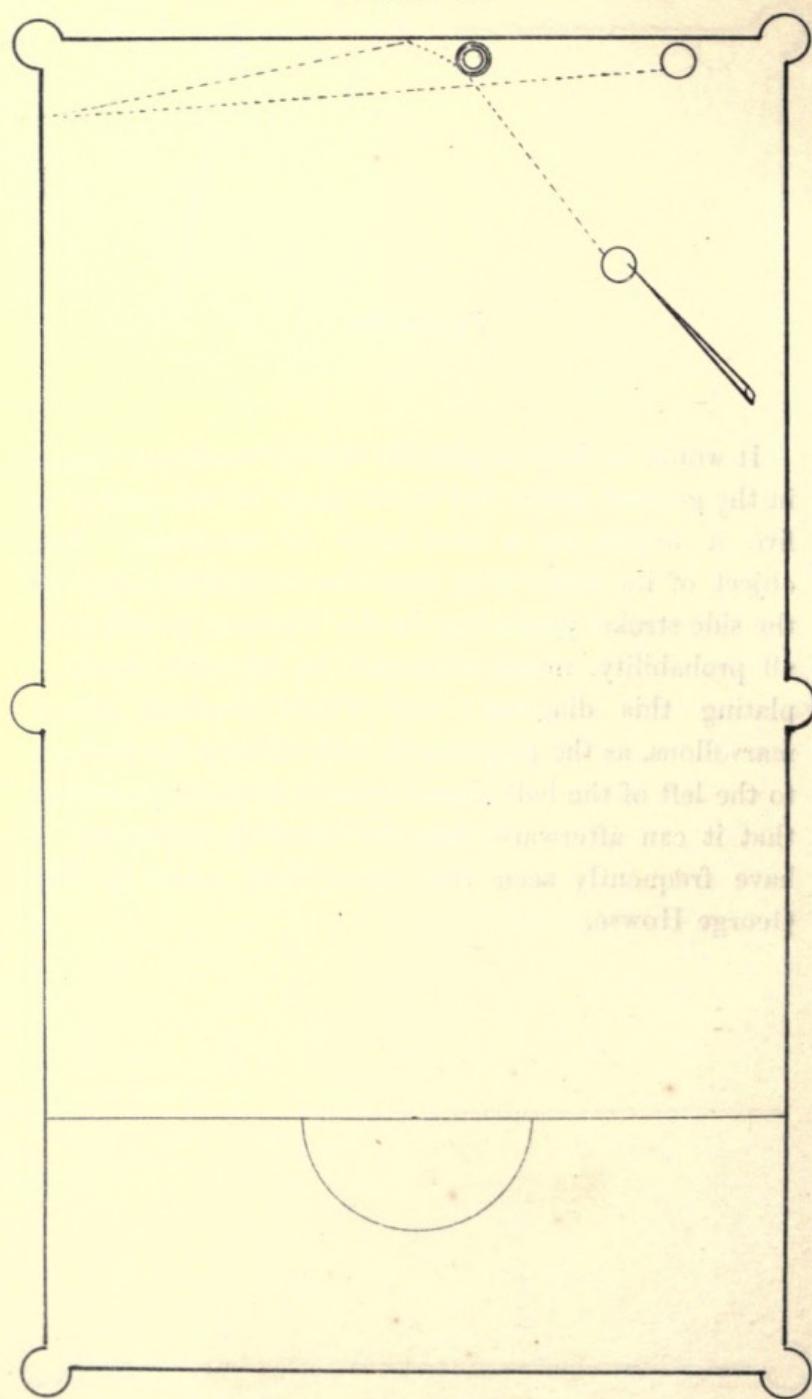


PLATE 79.

The ball of the opponent being close to the cushion the player may venture to play for a canon off the red. The ball played with must be struck on its right side. It will take the top cushion from the left of the red ball ; and, by means of the side stroke, will return from the side cushion in the direction of the white ball.



PLATE 80

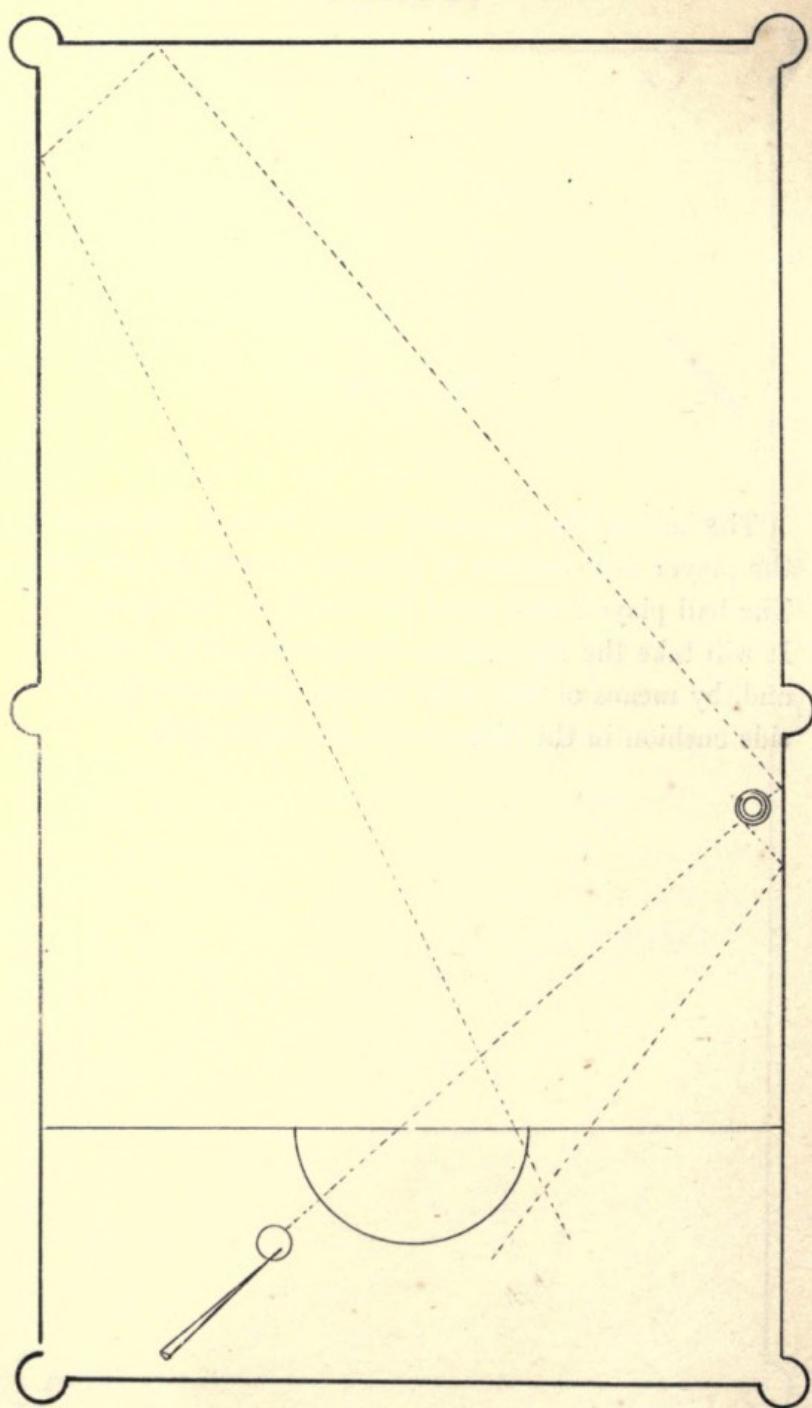


PLATE 80.

It frequently occurs that balls are in positions similar to those described when the player is within 1 point of losing the game, and consequently cannot give a miss. Under such circumstances he must play for a baulk. His ball must be struck low on the right side.

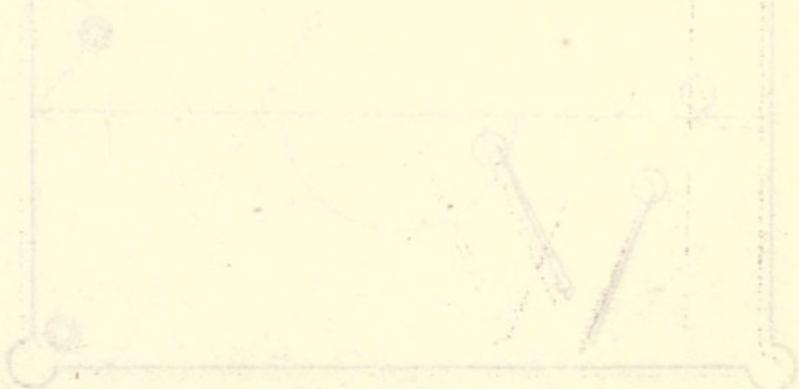


PLATE 81

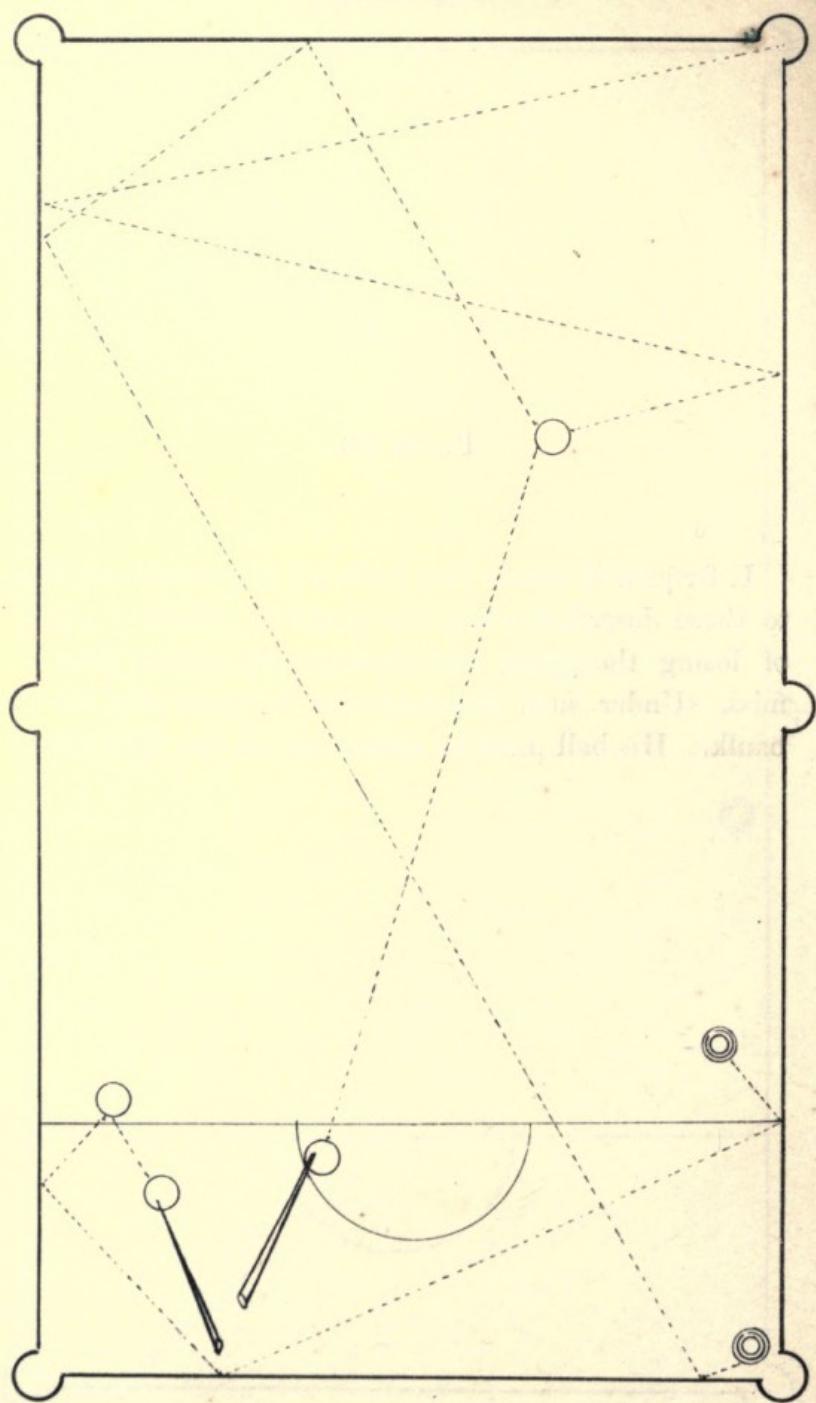


PLATE 81.

These canons are made by a side stroke, and, if carefully played, will prove to be strokes of safety should the canon be missed. The one for the canon to the right hand corner pocket can be more easily made by placing the ball of the player near the centre of the circle, and by playing on the right side of the ball played upon; but if it is the red ball that is over the corner pocket, I invariably play the stroke as described in the diagram; and I have always, on failure, either masked the red ball or placed my opponent's ball so close to the top cushion as to render his succeeding stroke quite harmless.

PLATE 82

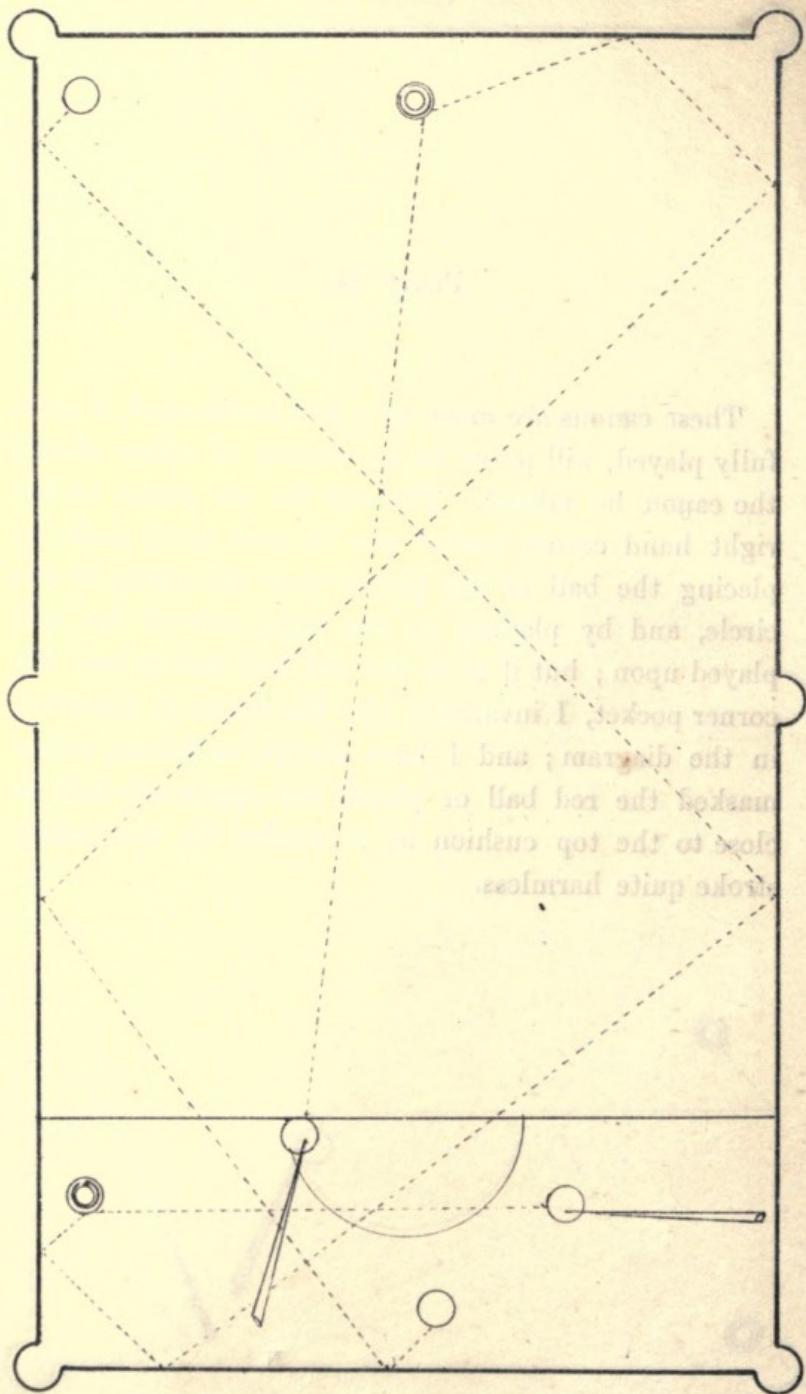


PLATE 82.

The ball of the striker facing the red by the cushion to the left. Twenty years since some of the best players would bet Mr. Kentfield three to one that he did not make a canon: now it is three to one that he does. The stroke is simple, and within the reach of an ordinary player accustomed to the use of the side twist. Strike the ball a little on the left side. The canon from the red ball on the spot has been frequently made; but I do not recommend the attempt, unless the opponent's ball be placed nearer to the left hand corner pocket.

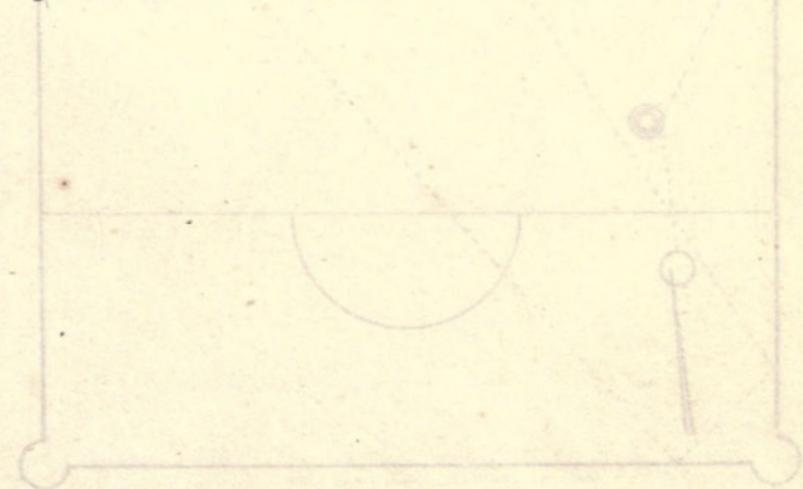


PLATE 83

CANON

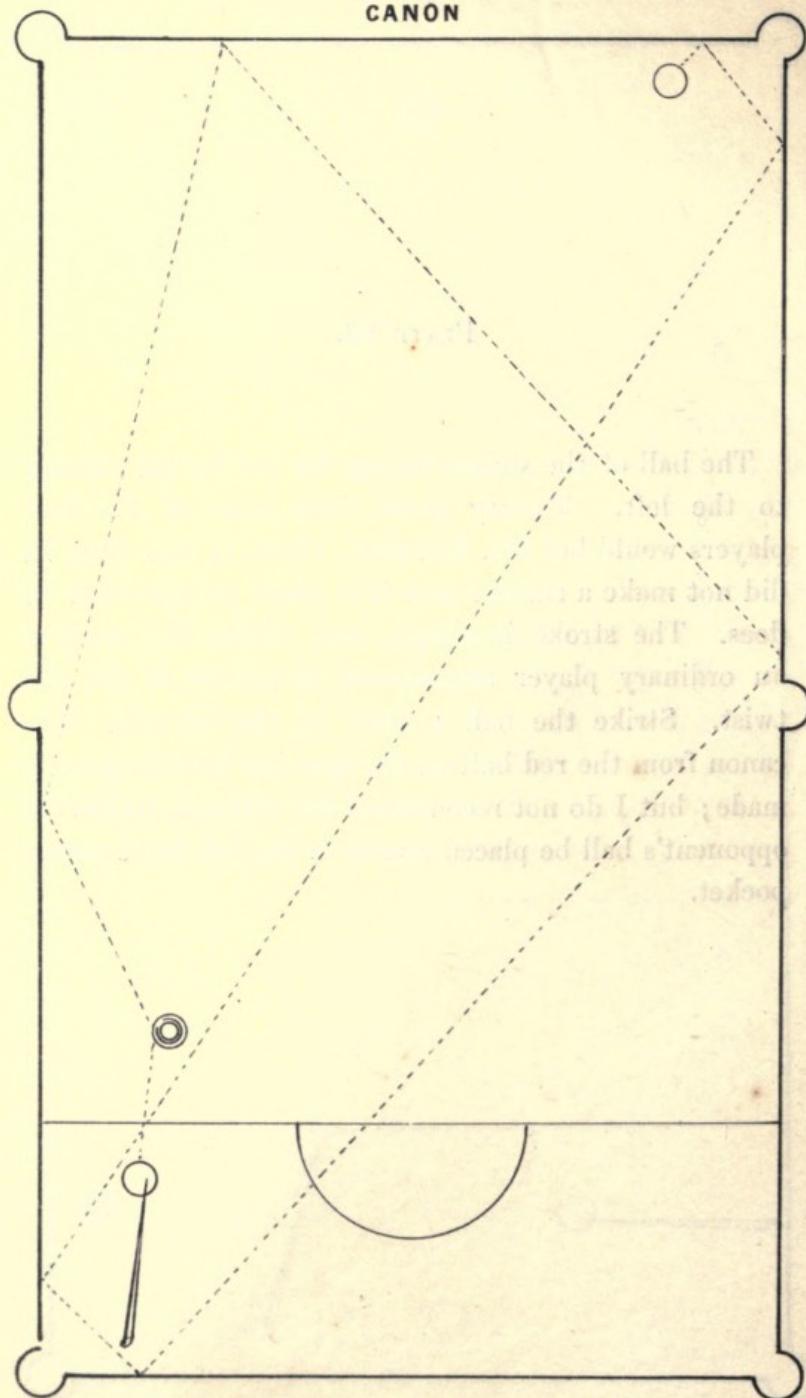


PLATE 83.

Upon a table as fast as the one in the Subscription Room in Manchester Street, Brighton, it is not difficult to make this canon in the manner described ; and, to a player delighting in the florid style of game, it may be very amusing ; but I, tortoise like, preferring a shorter road, play for it either direct from the side cushion to the left or through the medium of a walk. To this and to similar canons I may observe, in the words of Mr. Kentfield, "it is a pretty performance ; but I never saw any good arise from it."

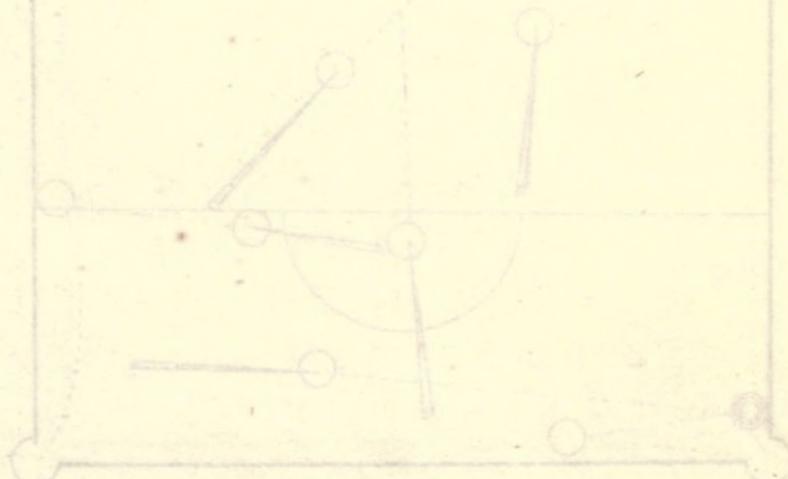


PLATE 84

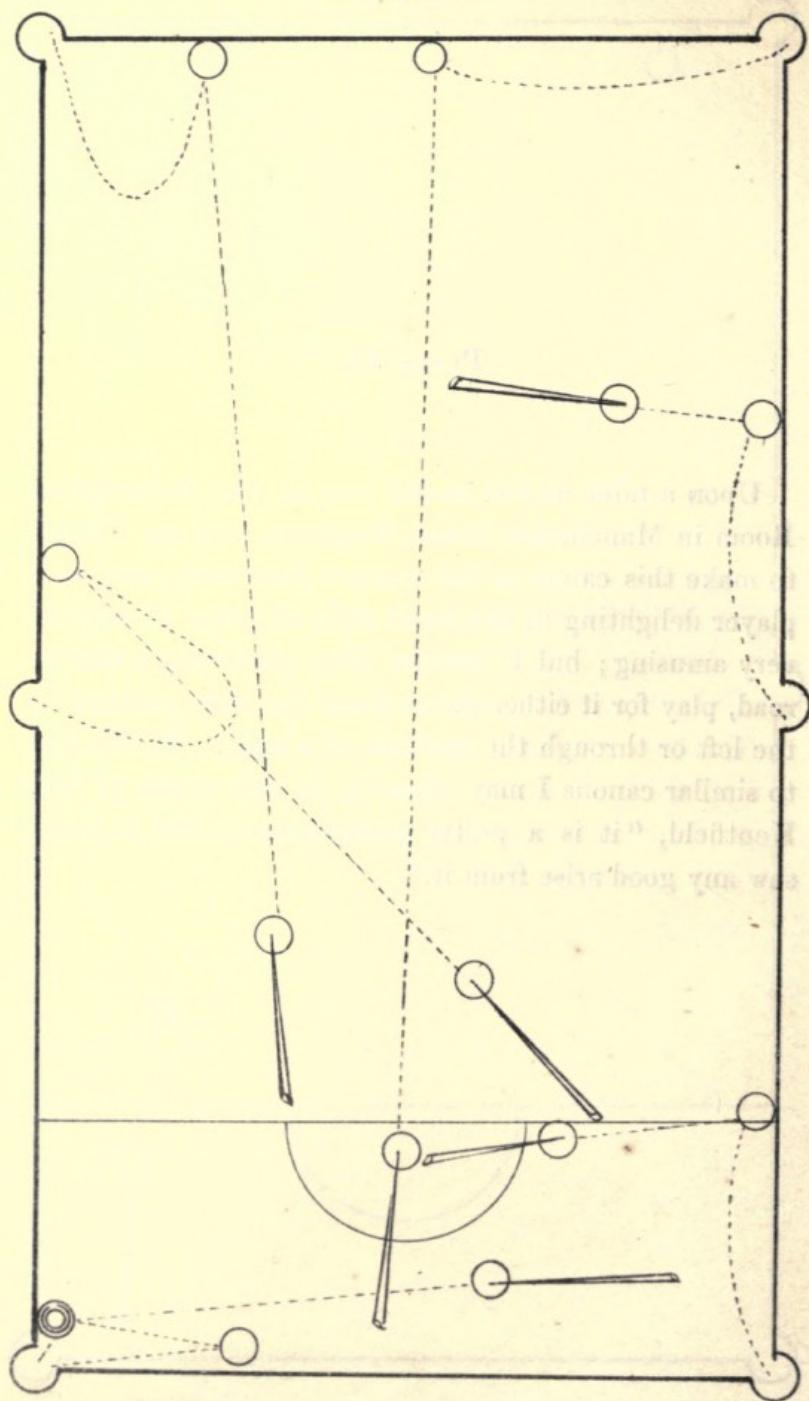


PLATE 84.

The losing hazard in the right hand corner pocket, and that for the right hand corner pocket in the baulk, were frequently made by a Gentleman of Cheltenham with whom I have often contended. The other strokes would never be attempted in the game, and are exhibited merely for the purpose of shewing what may be achieved through the medium of what is termed "a kiss." The hazard for the left hand corner pocket in the baulk represents an eight stroke.

PLATE 85

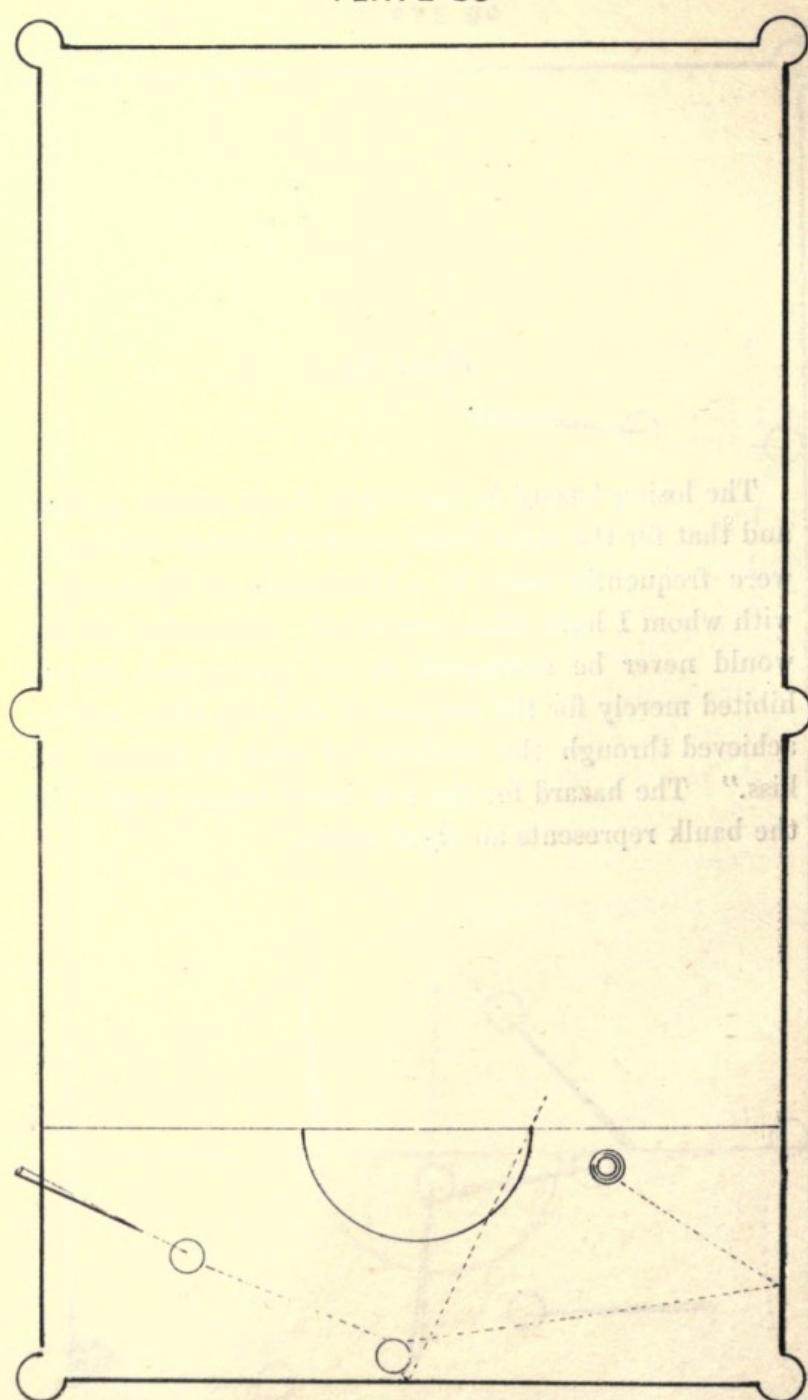


PLATE 85.

CANON.

If the game is well-advanced a canon must be played for off the red ball; but if the striker has the worst of it, he should play for the canon off the white. It must be done with a side stroke, and played so gently that the three balls will be together, player's ball* striking the red from the side cushion. Whenever the balls are in situations to admit of a canon being made with a probability of placing the three balls close together, always adopt that method of play, for scarcely any break can hold out a greater prospect of success. The making a series of canons with gentle strength, keeping the balls within the limit of a small circle, is fascinating to the player; and I have observed that ten or twelve canons made in succession, in the manner described, has at all times filled the spectators with admiration and surprise. When the balls are so far separated to render but one more canon practicable, be sure, in making it, to place one of the balls so near to a pocket that a score will be presented; since, from that hazard judiciously played, another long run may be obtained.

PLATE 86

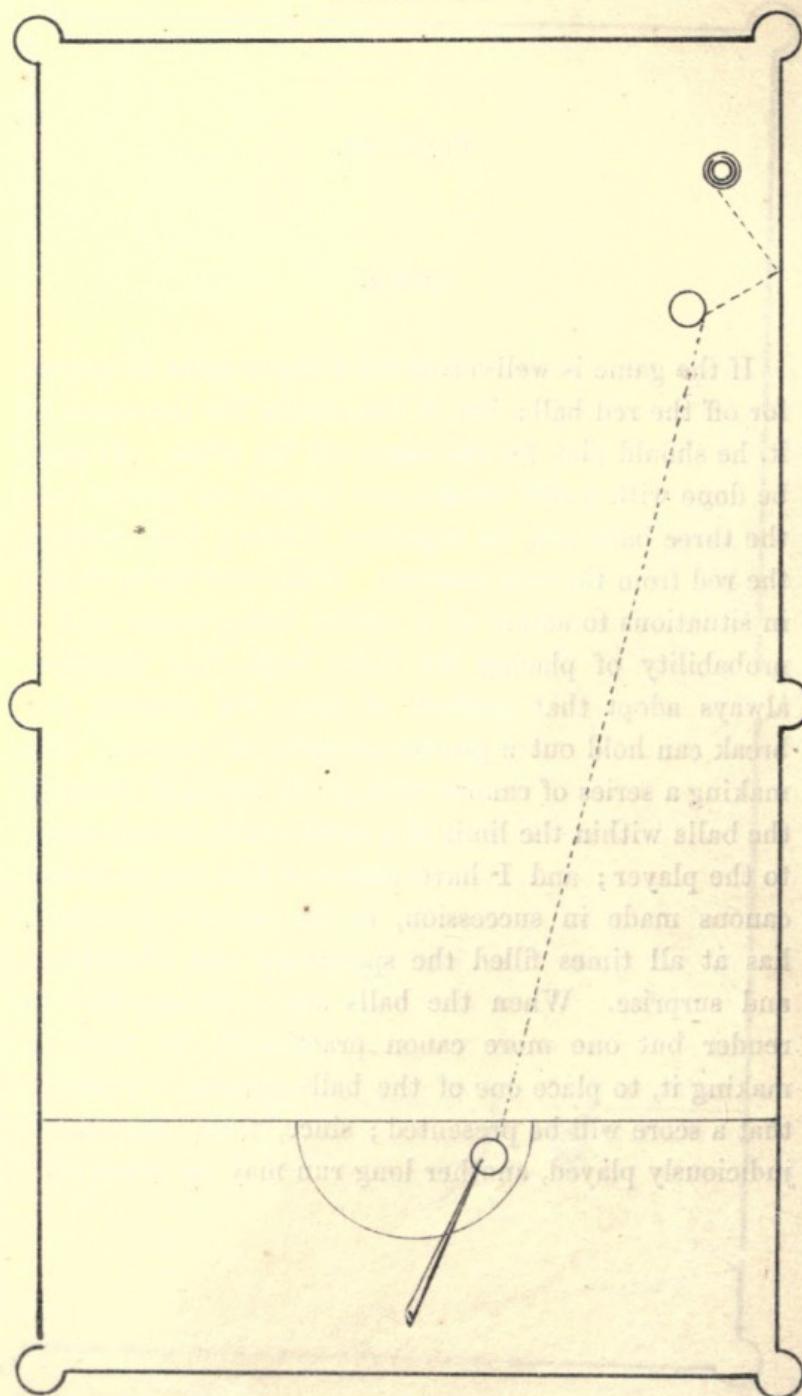
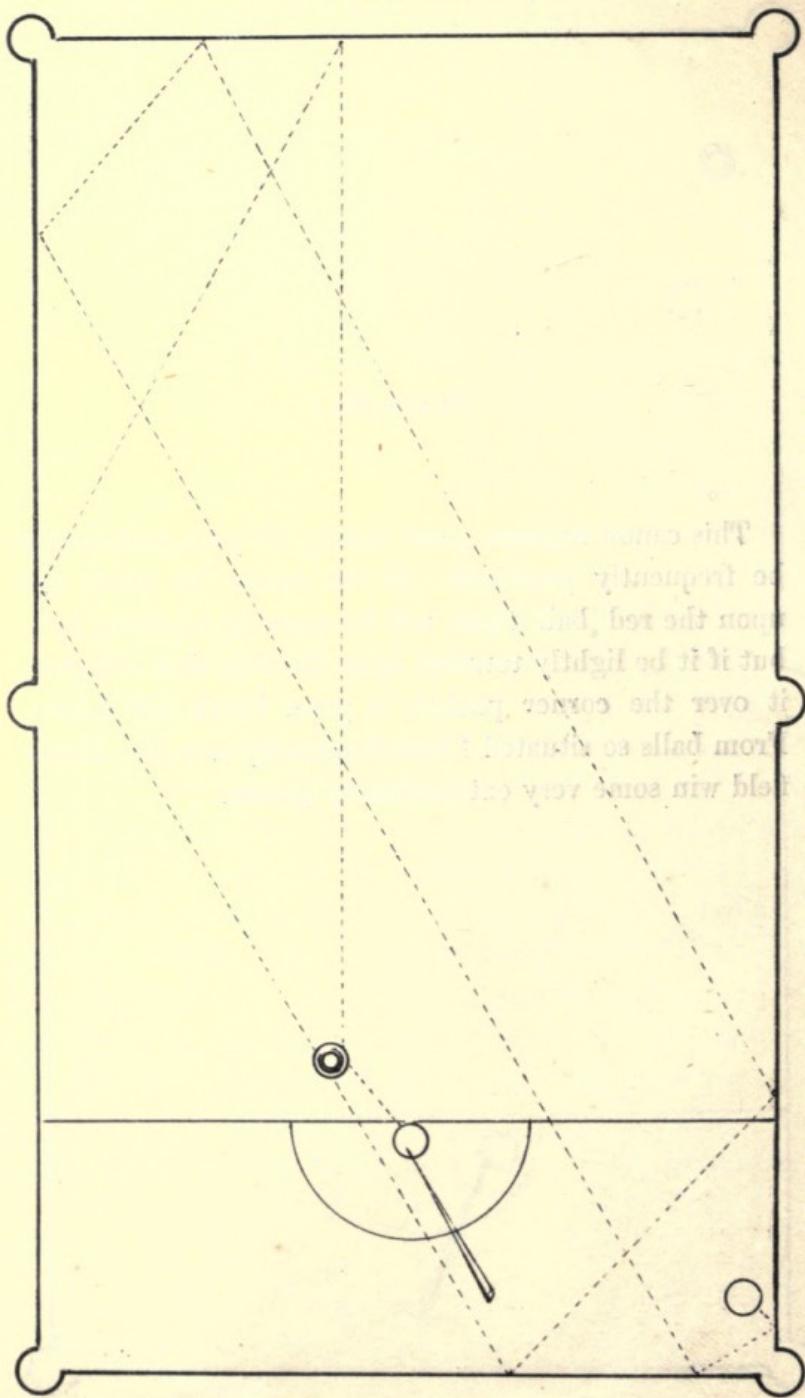


PLATE 86.

This canon requires great nicety of play, and should be frequently practised. If the canon be made full upon the red ball there will be scarcely anything left; but if it be lightly touched upon the side that will place it over the corner pocket, a great break will follow. From balls so situated I have frequently seen Mr. Kentfield win some very extraordinary games.

PLATE 87

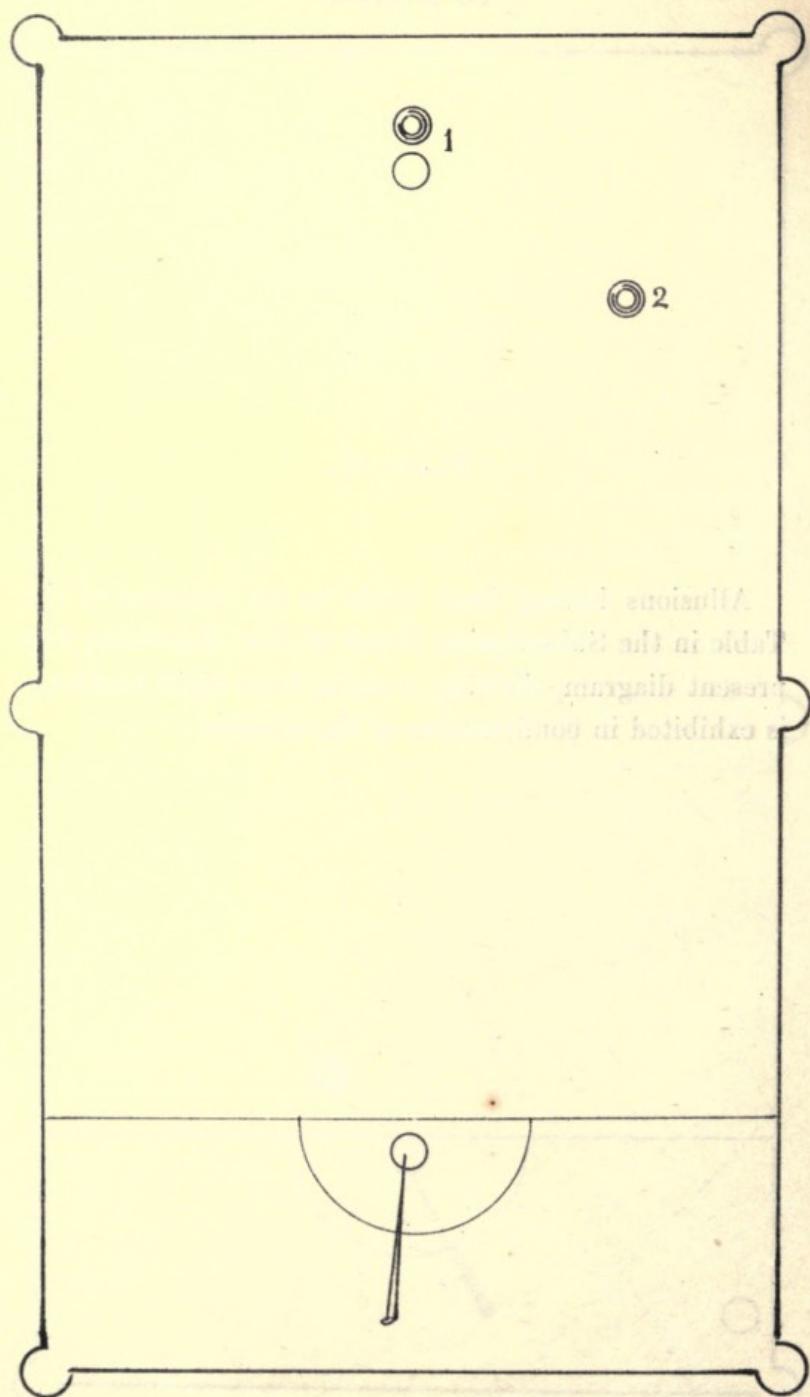


If ballast is placed in an engine of moderate power, and a proper place is found, it will be found that a number of weights, however heavy, may be suspended from a single beam, without any perceptible effect upon the strength of the beam.

PLATE 87.

Allusions having been made to the fastness of the Table in the Subscription Room of Mr. Kentfield, the present diagram, shewing a canon from eight cushions, is exhibited in confirmation of the remarks.

PLATE 88



If balls are placed in situations of extreme difficulty, and a player offers to back himself to score in a given number of strokes, be cautious how you lay a large sum against its accomplishment. Balls were placed as now represented. From those marked with Fig. 1 the player offered to back himself to cut a canon. It was pronounced to be impossible. I saw it fairly accomplished on the third attempt. Fig. 2 represents the red ball all but masking the pocket. The same Gentleman —the finest winning-hazard striker and, perhaps, the best amateur player of the day—in five attempts holed the played-with ball in the corner pocket by an almost imperceptible cut. The side stroke giving a curved line enables the player to perform it.

The game of the Gentleman whose prowess I am now recording comes the nearest, with reference to style, to that of Mr. Kentfield of any amateur I ever saw. Each ball appears to me to be played after a manner the most approved; and when the canon or hazard is made, the productiveness of the break is apparent, and the result decisive. Hundreds that were fortunate enough to witness, during the last winter, the matches played with Mr. Kentfield—1 pocket to 5—can testify to the truth of these remarks: and if similar games are repeated in the approaching season, the visitors to the Room will experience a delight far beyond their expectation. Some can “Bear no brother near the throne;” others “Envy an excellency they cannot reach;” I, admiring the beauty of a well-played stroke, appreciate its worth, and laud the mind from whence it sprung.

PLATE 89
IMPORTANT CANON

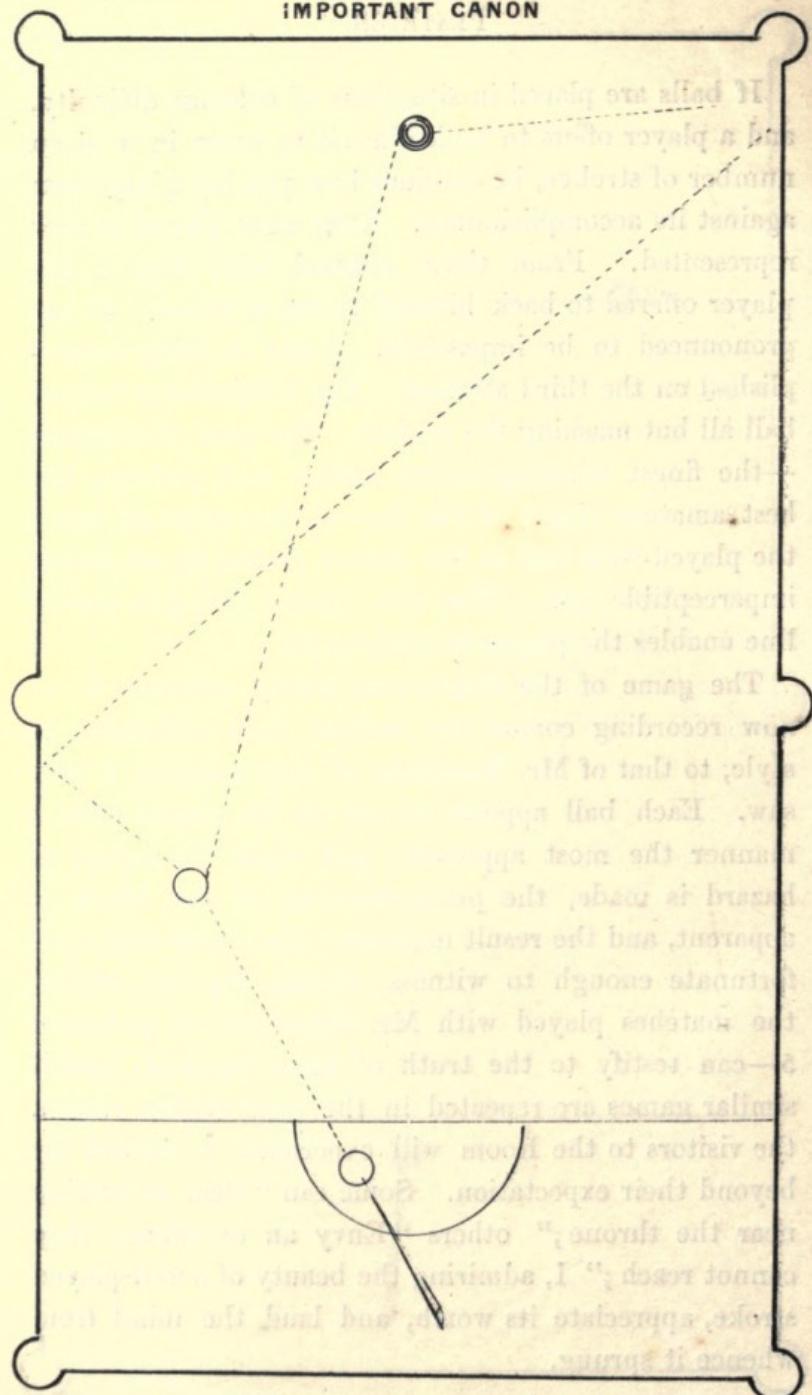


PLATE 89.

IMPORTANT CANON.

I have, in various pages, directed the attention of the player to the advantages derived from making a canon on the proper side of the ball: the productiveness of the break, and the winning of a game, may depend upon so doing. The canon now described is, therefore, represented for the purpose of affording the best practice; and it should be played until the art is acquired. Mr. Kentfield, Mr. John Pook, and the talented Amateur of whom honorable mention has been made in Plate 88, would invariably double the white ball to the opposite corner pocket and canon on the *left* side of the red, producing, consequently, a break that would yield a run of many points. The making a canon full upon the ball lies within the capability of ordinary players, but a correctness of execution requires the hand of a master. The game of Billiards is, I am inclined to believe, in most parts of England, still creeping with infant steps: at Brighton it has reached the stride of manhood, each break evincing the knowledge and sound judgment of maturer years. Persons witnessing the style of game of the parties to whom allusion is now made, and capable of appreciating the beauties attendant upon superior execution combined with exquisite *strengths*, would behold a mine of hidden treasure brought to light, and experience an enjoyment worthy of hours of reflection.

PLATE 90

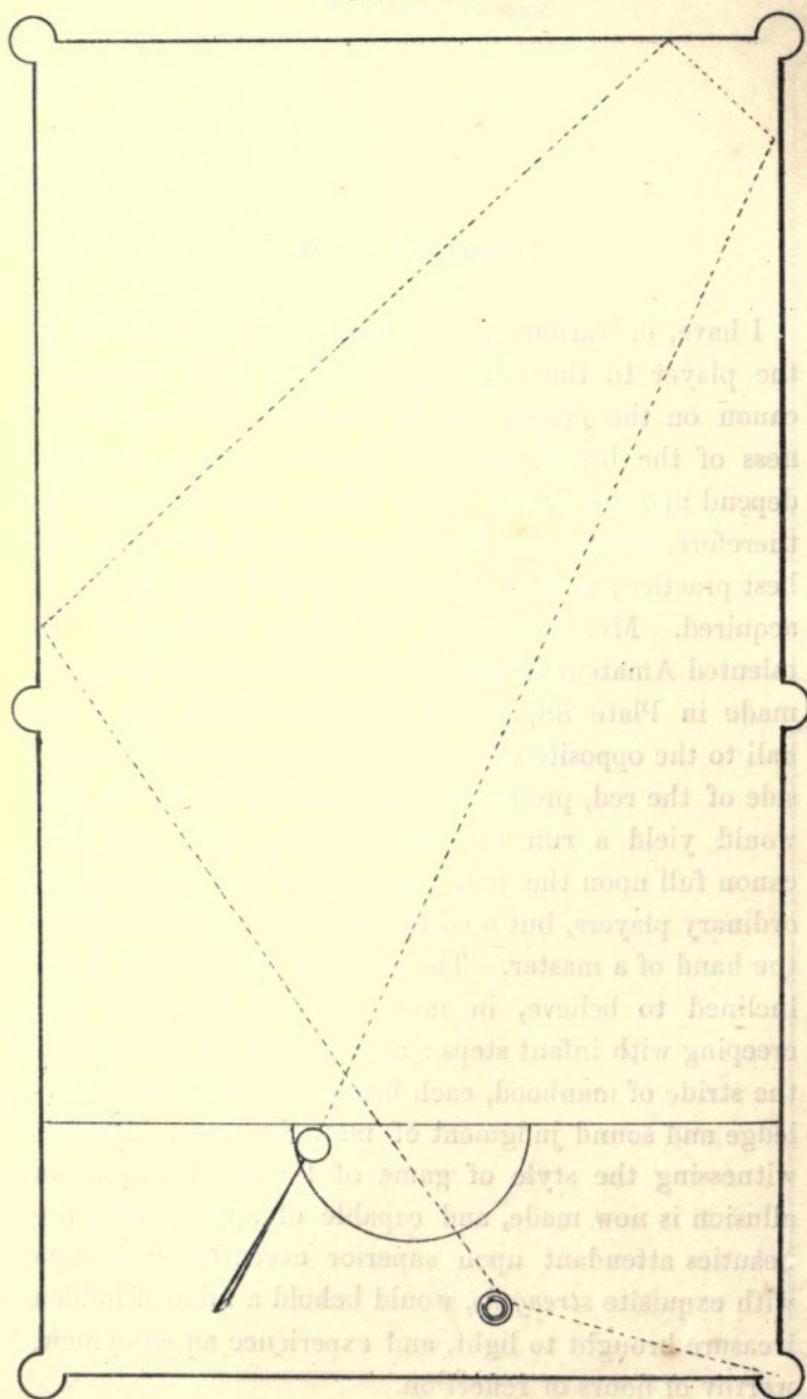


PLATE 90.

THE GREATEST OF MR. KENTFIELD'S ACHIEVEMENTS.

The most wonderful performance achieved by Mr. Kentfield is represented in the annexed plate. He was playing with Captain W—a game of 100 up, giving *3 strokes to 1!* The score of Captain W—had reached 99 points; that of Mr. Kentfield only 47; and the red ball—the only one on the Table—was placed as described in the diagram. Mr. Kentfield had to play back. If he missed the ball or, in fact, failed to score, the game was as good as over; for the three strokes allowed to his opponent would have insured the point required. Mr. Kentfield, playing after the manner described, holed the played-with ball from the red, and made, in losing and winning hazards, the remaining 53 points! When Mr. Kentfield has described this performance to many an eager listener, I have always heard him speak of it as the most wonderful of his achievements.

PLATE 91

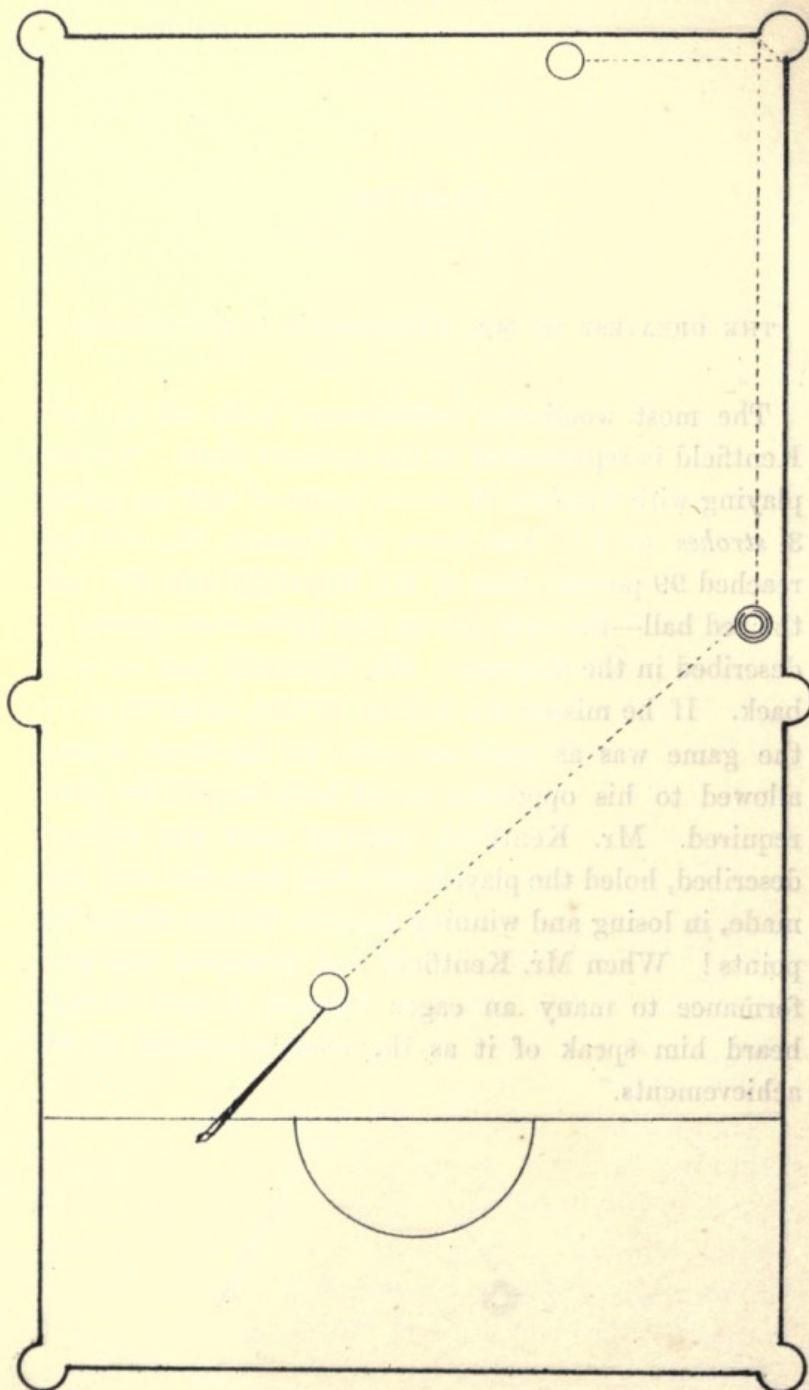


PLATE 91.

Although the holeing of the played-with ball in the corner pocket from the red appears difficult and its accomplishment uncertain, it is nevertheless not more than an even bet against making a score if the ball of the opponent is placed as now represented ; for, should the ball of the player strike the cushion too far from the pocket to admit of its entering, the shoulder of the cushion will give to the ball the direction indicated in the plate, and a canon is sure to follow.



PLATE 92

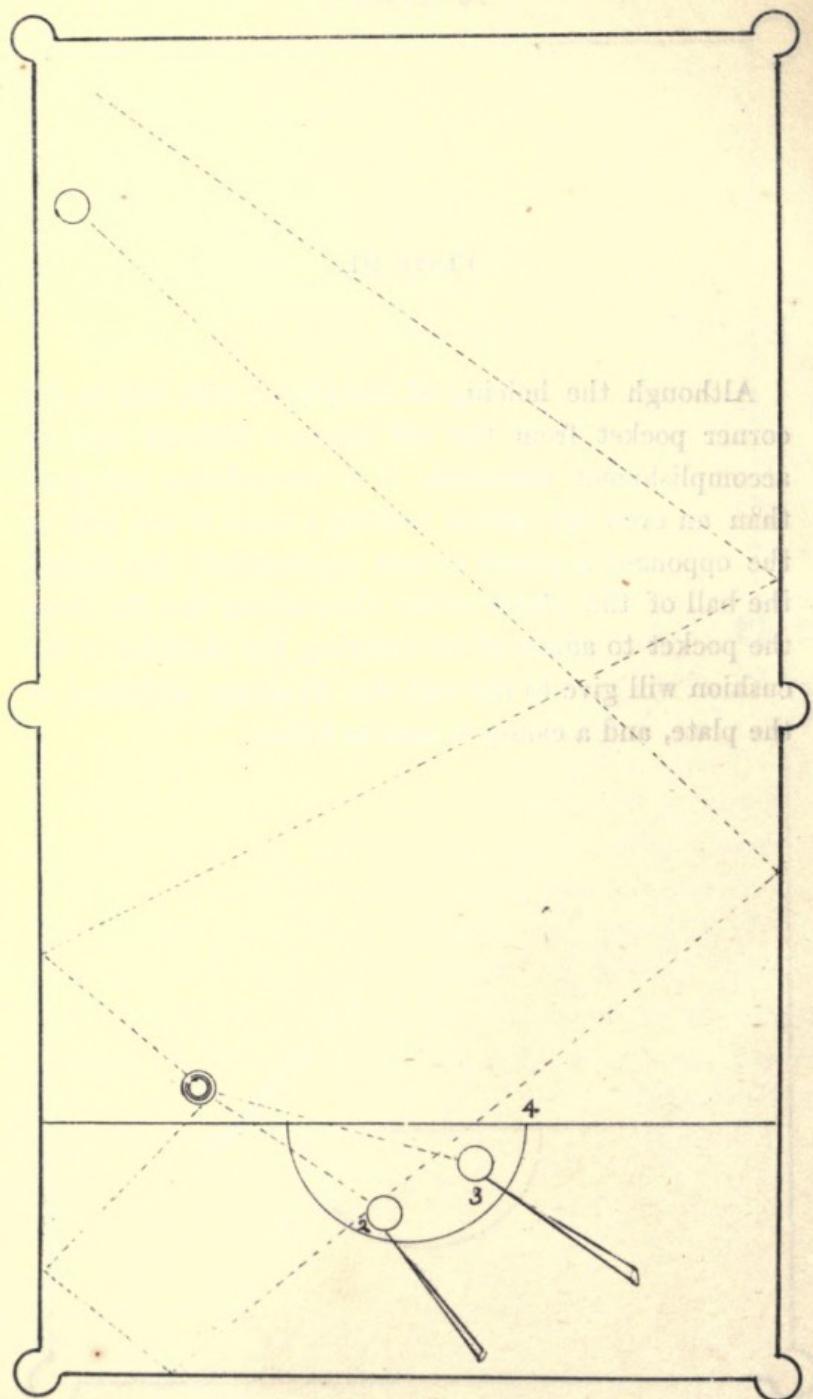


PLATE 92.

From balls situated as they are now represented, the generality of players, the ball being in hand, would place the played-with ball at Fig. 2, and play for a canon direct from the right side of the red ball; but thus played the balls would be separated, and probably no score left. If the player placed his ball at Fig. 3, and attempted the canon after the manner described in the plate, the balls would be brought together, and a fine break produced. The canon from a ball placed at the corner of the baulk circle at Fig. 4 would appear more simple, but the red ball, by being struck fuller, would not take the direction of the left hand corner pocket, to which part of the Table it ought to be propelled. Let me once more observe that when the ball is in hand it must be so placed that the contemplated score may lead to great results. It is by such a method of play that Mr. Kentfield and Mr. Roberts have become so formidable.

PLATE 93

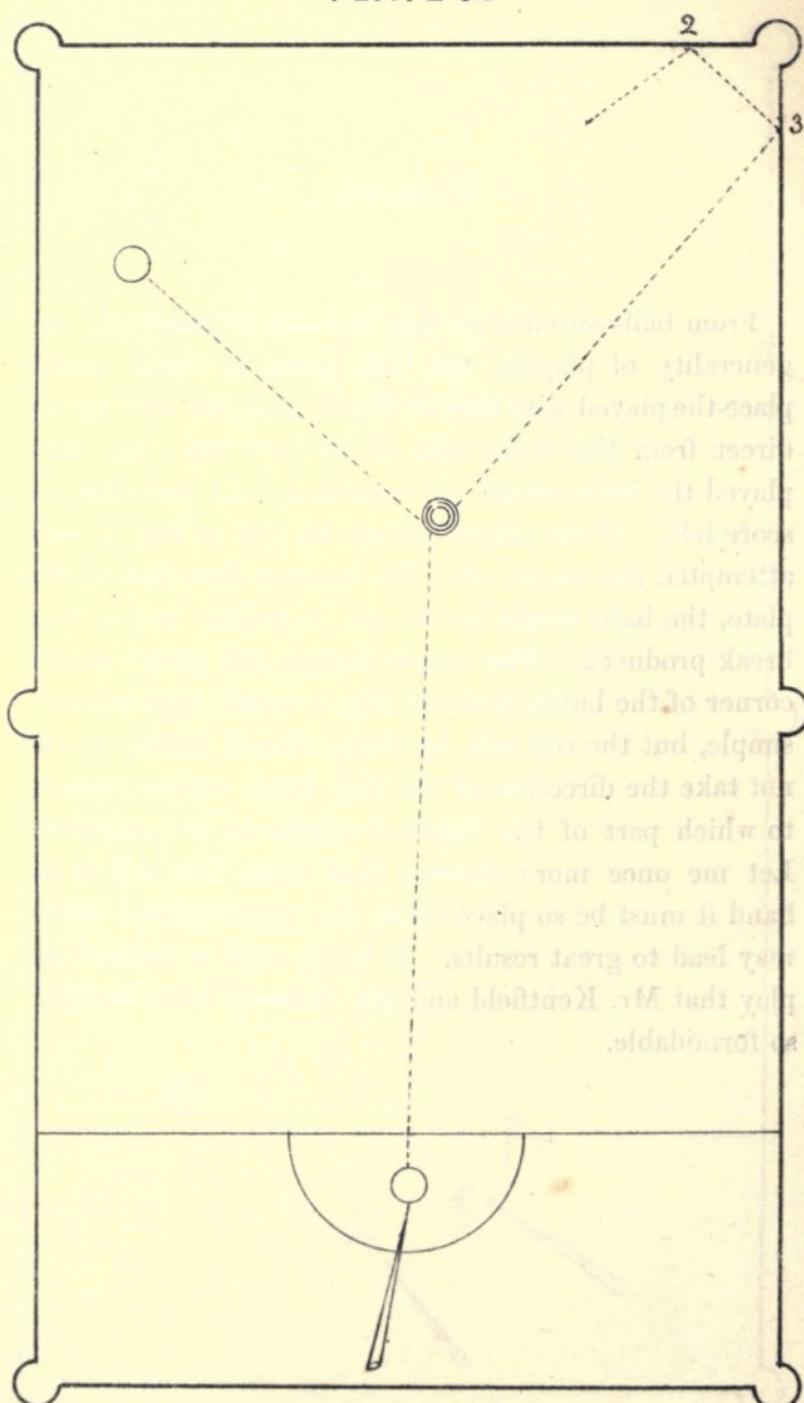


PLATE 93.

This canon, although apparently simple, requires, upon a fast Table, great delicacy of play, and although it appears to hold out a prospect of success, I have seen it made by very good players without their having obtained even a second score. They have either played for a five stroke, or to canon and drop the red ball over the right hand corner pocket, but getting too full upon the ball it has taken the top cushion at Fig. 2 and remained safe at Fig. 3. If the player gets finer upon the left of the red ball, it will take the direction marked by the course of the ball, and a certain score will generally follow. I have frequently practised this canon, and I have always found a score to succeed whenever the red ball has been made to take the *side* cushion ere it has touched the top one.

PLATE 94

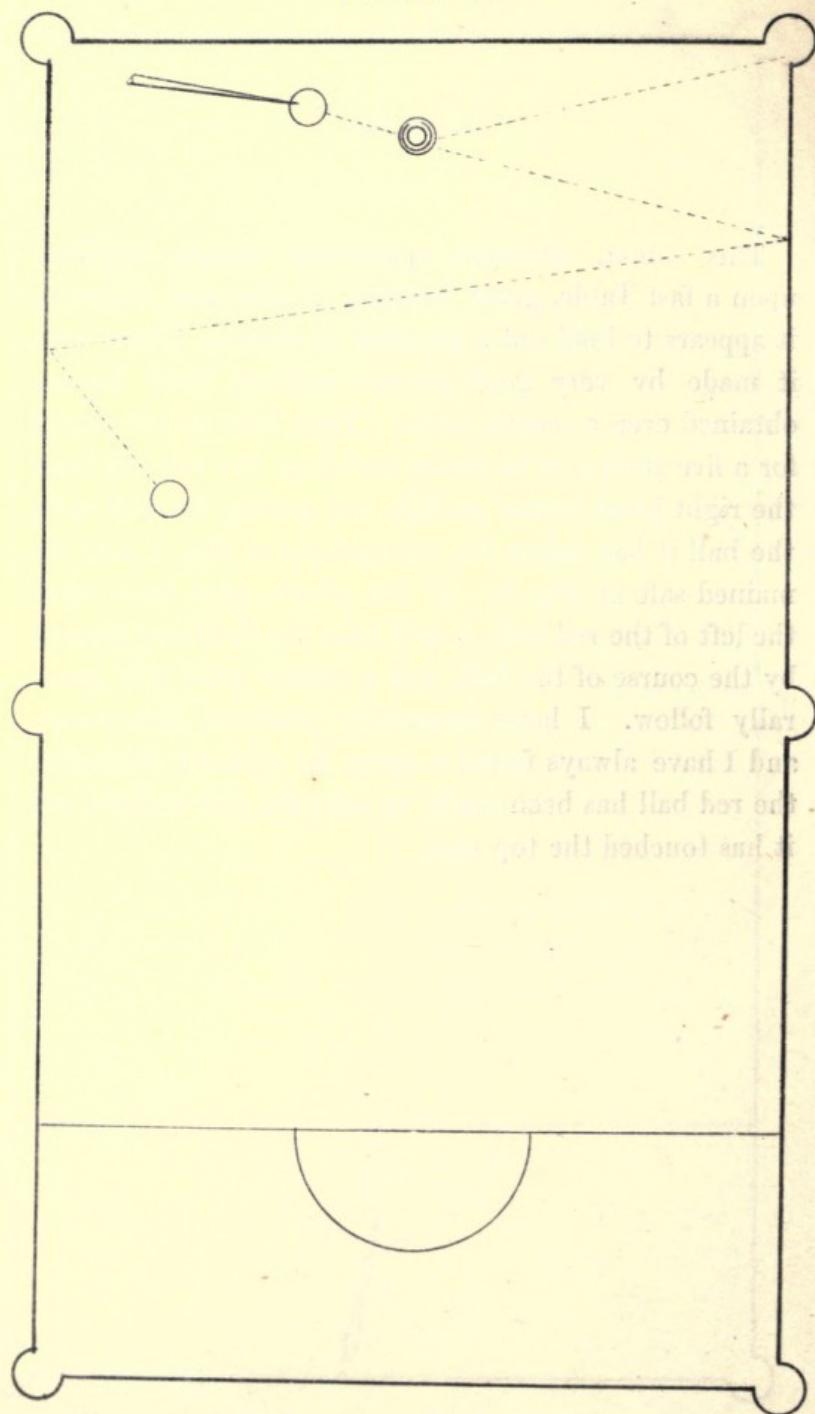


PLATE 94.

The advantages derived from walking through a ball and converting, by such means, a winning into a losing hazard, have been already pointed out; the present diagram, however, will shew most forcibly its very great importance, for as the red ball will be doubled to a situation near the white, a certain canon will be left for the following stroke, and that executed with gentle strength will lead, in all probability, to a long run. The stroke now represented is not so difficult as it appears. Strike the red ball full; the side-stroke will impart to the played-with ball a strong inclination towards the pocket, the size of which will be greatly increased by its operation.

PLATE 95

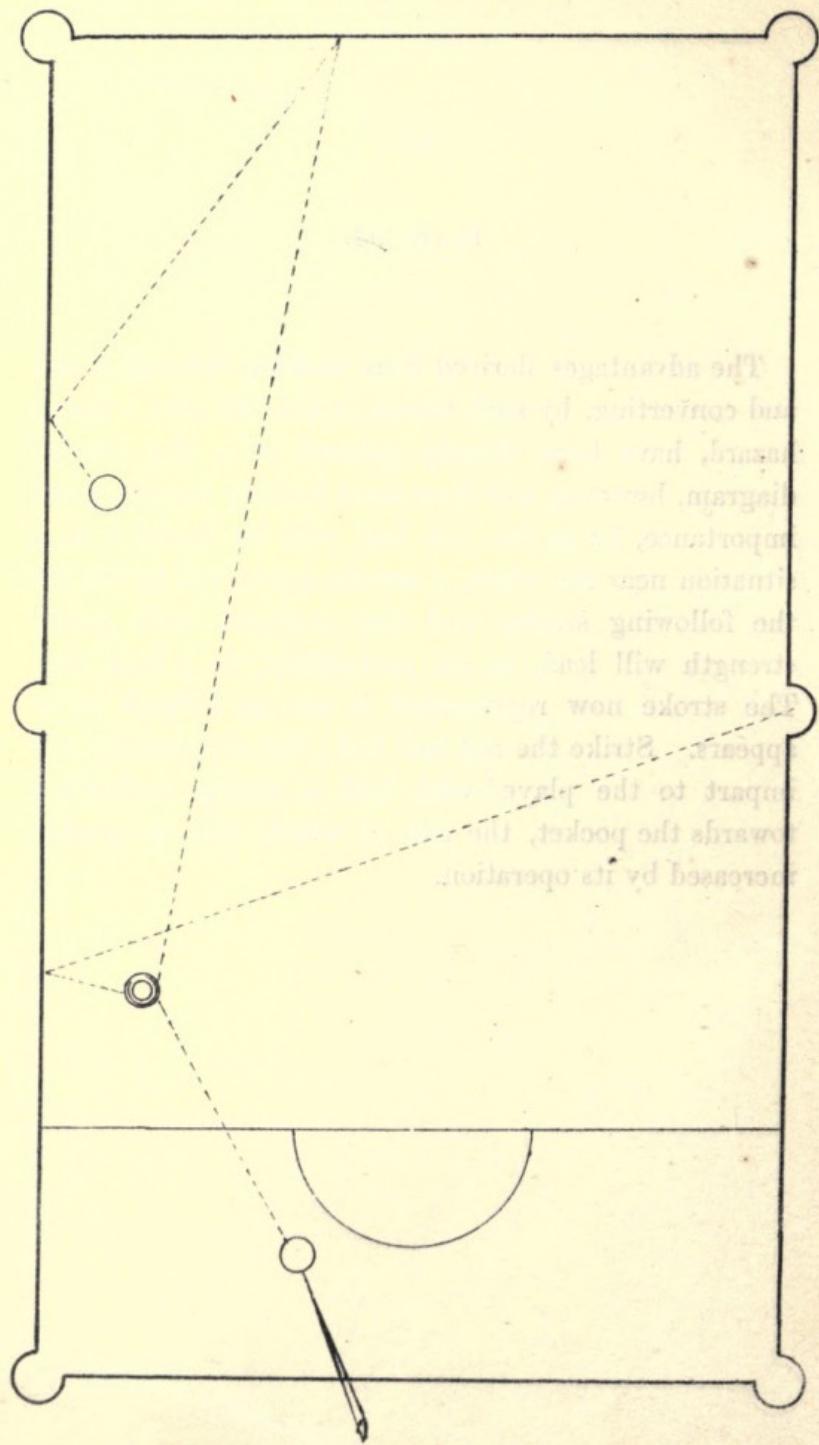


PLATE 95.

From balls thus placed there are two ways of playing for a canon. You may double the red ball for the centre pocket and canon from the top cushion through the agency of the counter side-stroke, or the played-with ball may be struck in the centre and a canon effected by walking directly through the ball. I practised both methods and found the canon from the top cushion to be the safest. When two ways of scoring are presented it is best to adopt the one that holds out the greatest security in case of failure, provided the player has the best of the game. The speed of the modern Tables, yielding many chance hazards, will occasionally frustrate the strictest system of defence; but do not allow such occurrences to induce you to depart from that style of game, for in the end science will prevail.

PLATE 96

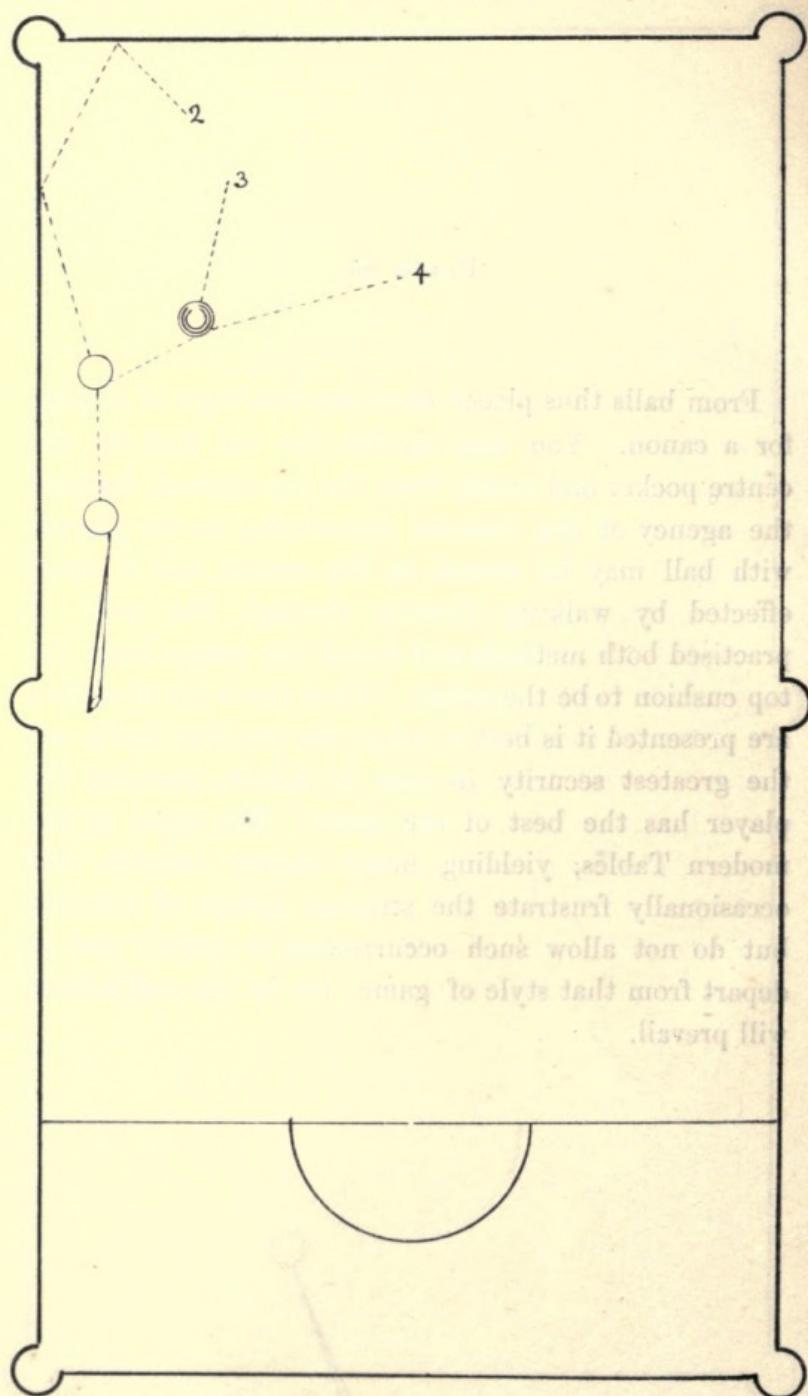


PLATE 96.

A gentleman, a fine hazard striker, had the balls thus situated when he required but ten points to complete the game. He holed the white ball in the corner pocket and canoned. The pocket being small, the spectators were charmed with the execution of the stroke. The red ball, after the canon, remained safe, and the striker lost the game. Had this fine hazard striker possessed a knowledge of the game, and accustomed himself to reflect upon the best method of playing a break, he must have perceived that by playing gently and striking the white ball rather finer instead of full, he would have placed that ball at Fig. 2; the red at Fig. 3; and his own ball at Fig. 4; and from such a break the number of points required must have been obtained. However brilliant the execution may become, the player will find it of little service unless it is controlled and directed by the mind.

PLATE 97

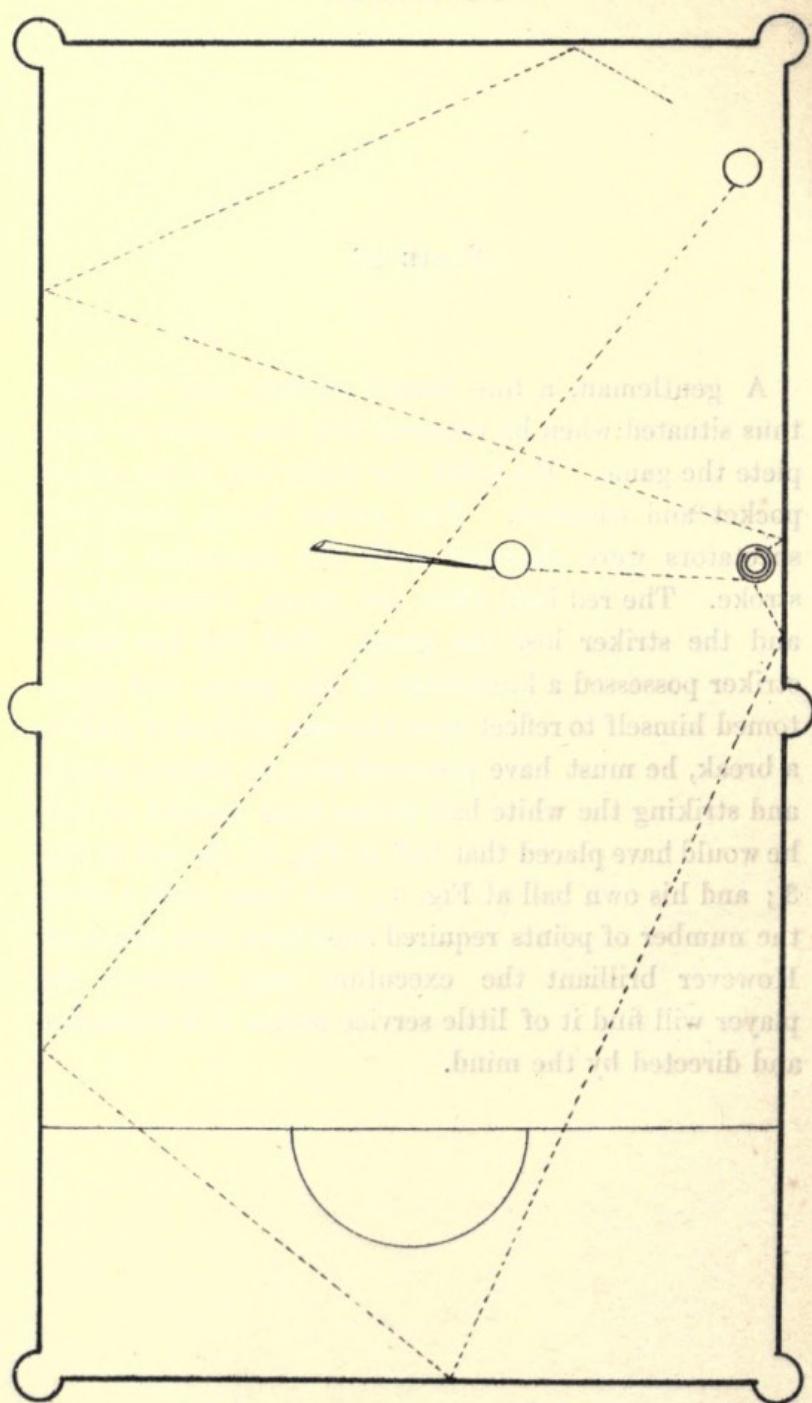


PLATE 97.

It would be a folly, in this instance, to hole the white ball; and the canon from the top cushion might endanger a kiss. A canon from the red ball after the manner described would be very productive, as the balls would remain nearly together. Do not let the attempt of canoning from several cushions dismay, for when the ball of the opponent is within an inch or two of a side or top cushion its size is greatly magnified. The canon, to myself, would be infinitely easier than the holeing of the white ball. If the learner of the game obtains a knowledge of the angles by observing the course of a ball from cushion to cushion, the apparent difficulty of these round-about canons will be at once dispelled, for if the played-with ball, when struck in the centre, takes the first cushion correctly, its course from the others must follow in the direction required. If the side-stroke is necessary for the purpose,—perhaps of regulating the strength connected with the progress of the object ball,—the angle will be false, but a knowledge of its properties will, of course, enable the player to make the necessary allowance.

PLATE 98

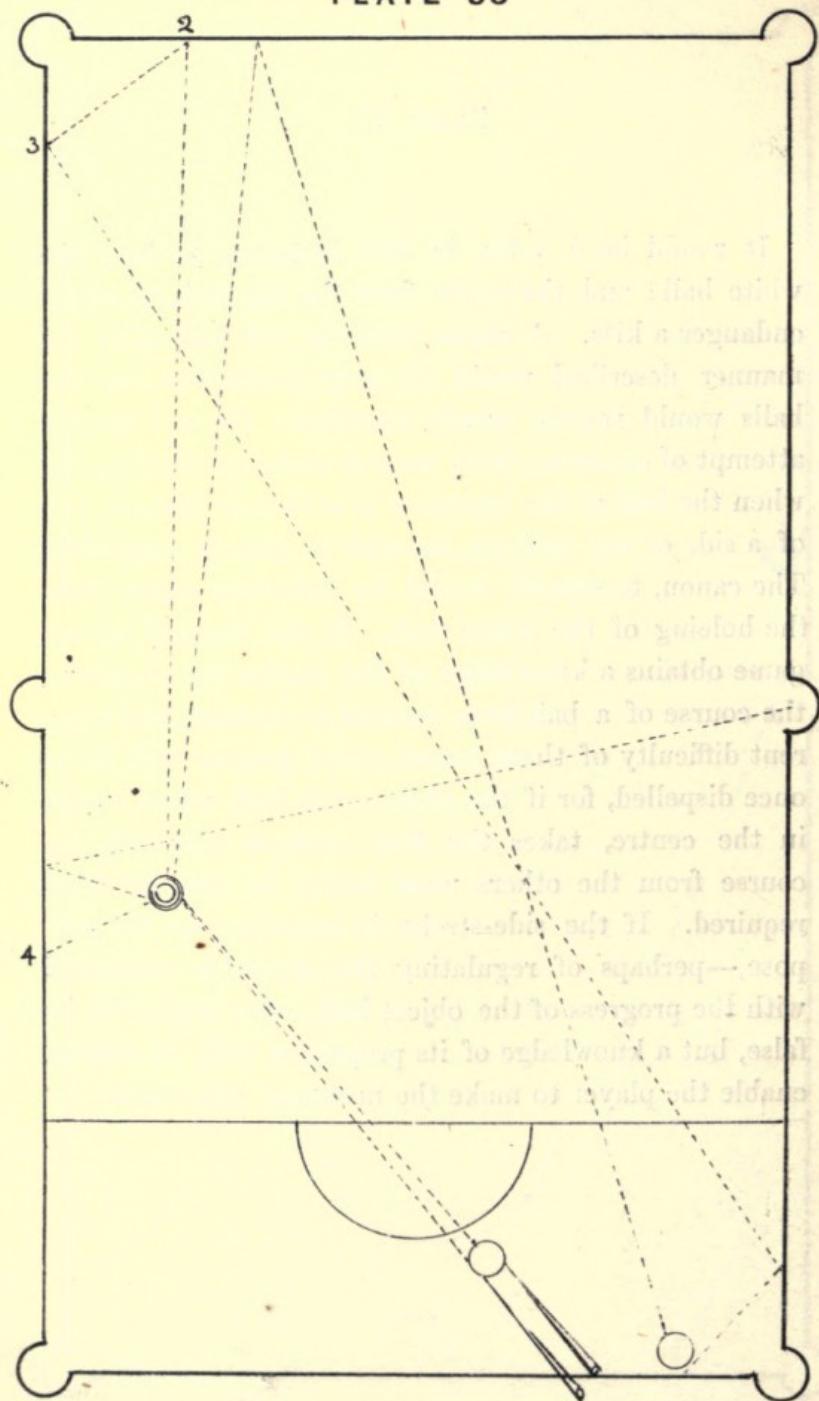


PLATE 98.

Although the balls thus situated appear to be nearly safe, there are four methods of scoring. The proper way of playing would be to make a losing hazard from the white ball by walking through it, striking the played-with ball on the right side. Should it appear desirable to leave the ball of the adversary close to the cushion, a canon may be attempted in two ways, combining a double for the centre pocket. The canon from the right side of the played-with ball, if gently played, will be made direct from the top cushion, and the one from striking the ball on the left side, with greater force, will be made after the manner described, hitting the top cushion at Fig. 2, and the side cushion at Fig. 3. A canon can also be made from the side cushion at Fig. 4. To myself, the holeing of the played-with ball in the corner pocket from the white, would be much the easiest, and the hazard thus made would be the most productive.

PLATE 99

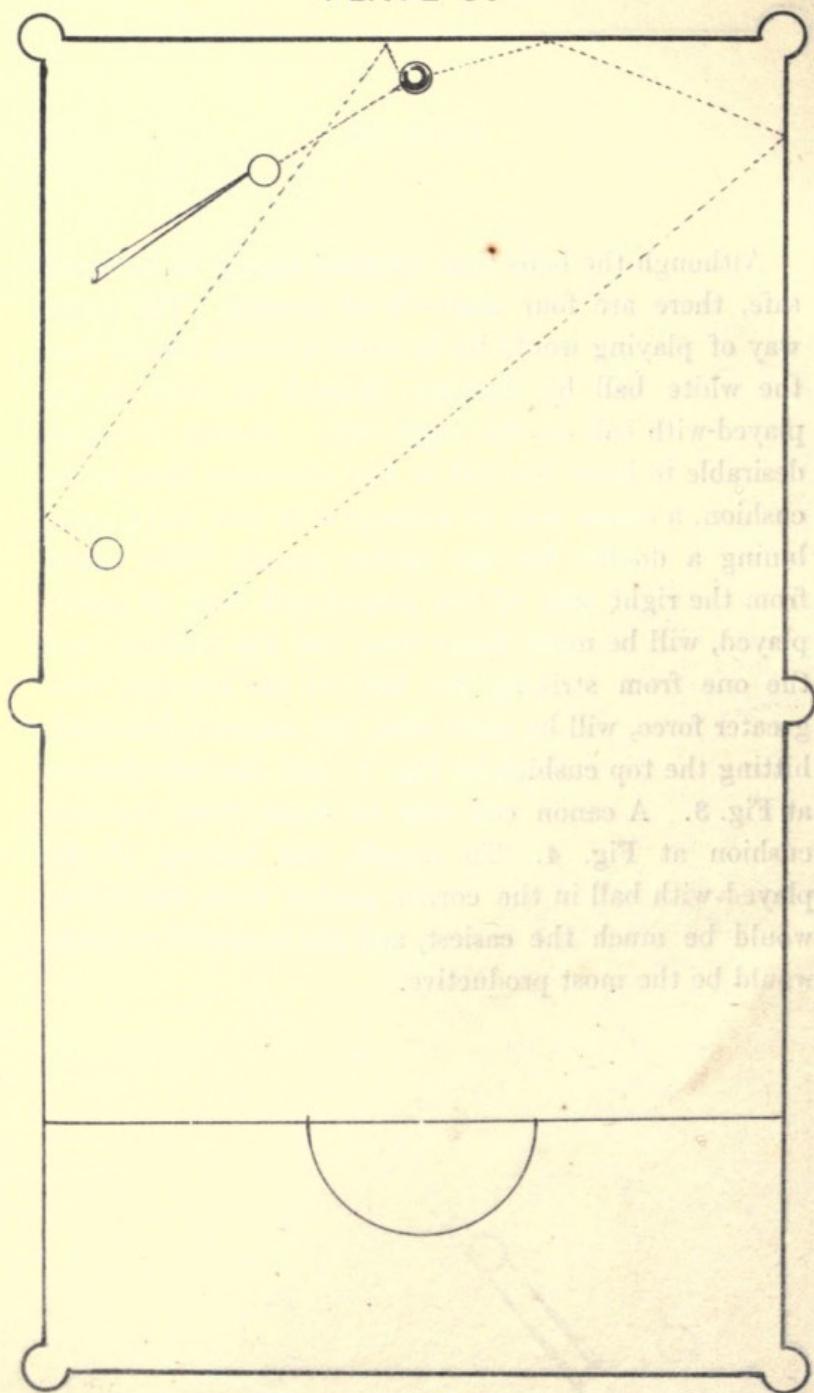


PLATE 99.

The balls as now placed would appear, to an indifferent player, nearly safe. It would require a very good stroke either to make a losing hazard by walking through the red ball, or to hole it in the corner pocket. To a player capable of hitting the played-with ball upon its side, the canon now described would be the easier score, and, if played with a nicety of strength, would leave an excellent break. In playing for canons of this description the first consideration is good strength; that is, the necessary strength required to take the red ball from the top and side cushion and to place it near to where the white would be when the canon was made. In all such instances the side-stroke, a *substitute* for strength of hitting, becomes invaluable, since it can be so regulated that the object ball can be made to wander either over a surface of many feet or restrained within the circumscribed space of a few inches ! This is science. The mind *seeing* the proper mode of action; the hand carrying its dictates into effect.

PLATE 100

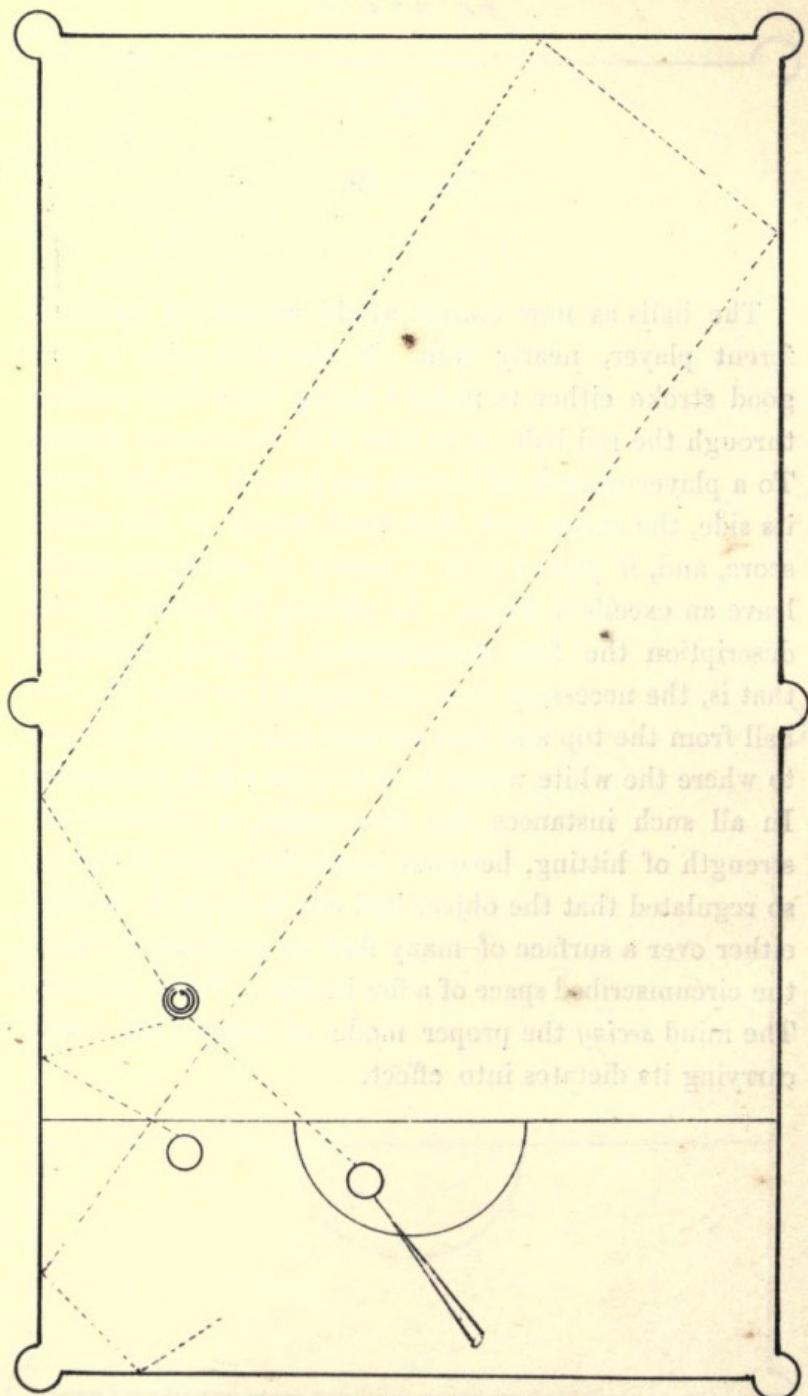


PLATE 100.

It has frequently occurred that persons possessing a knowledge of the game have departed from the correct method of playing, adopting one that presented a certain score, when over-anxious to win, or when a larger stake than usual had been put upon the game. These remarks are drawn forth in consequence of seeing, under such circumstances, a canon played for from the white ball when the striker had a backward game, and required a good run to have given him a chance. He made the canon, but the balls were placed in safety. Had he canoned from the red ball, after the manner described in the plate, a promising break would have followed. A gentleman playing in a similar manner when Mr. Kentfield was present, was thus addressed: "Whatever, Sir, could have induced you to play the ball after such a manner?" He replied, "I was afraid of not scoring." "You could," said Mr. Kentfield, "but have lost the game, and you will lose it now." And so it came to pass! Do not, therefore, allow an increased stake to induce you to depart from the correct method of playing the break, for what is the use of making a certain score if it yields no more than the points it has given.

PLATE 101

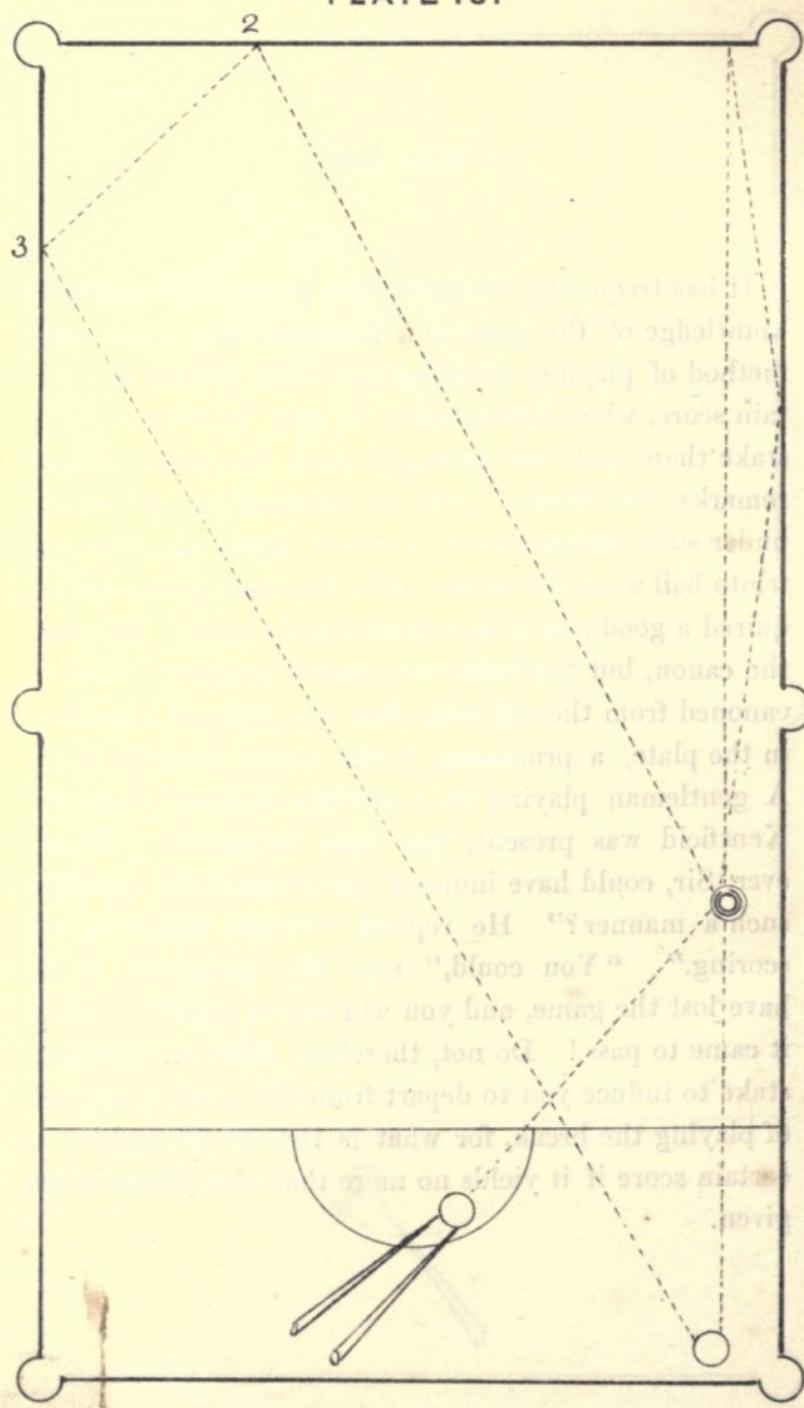


PLATE 101.

If more than two points were required, no player of eminence would think of holeing the white ball. The way of playing this break would be to canon from the red ball through the medium of the counter side-stroke, and as that ball would be doubled to the neighbourhood of one of the centre pockets, another score ought to follow; or, the played-with ball, applying greater force, might be struck on the left side, and the canon made by twisting the ball to the top cushion at Fig. 2, taking the side one at Fig. 3. When two methods exist, each holding out the same prospect of success, I incline to the one that can be accomplished with gentle strength, for the application of a strong blow renders the correct delivery of the cue uncertain.

PLATE 102

3

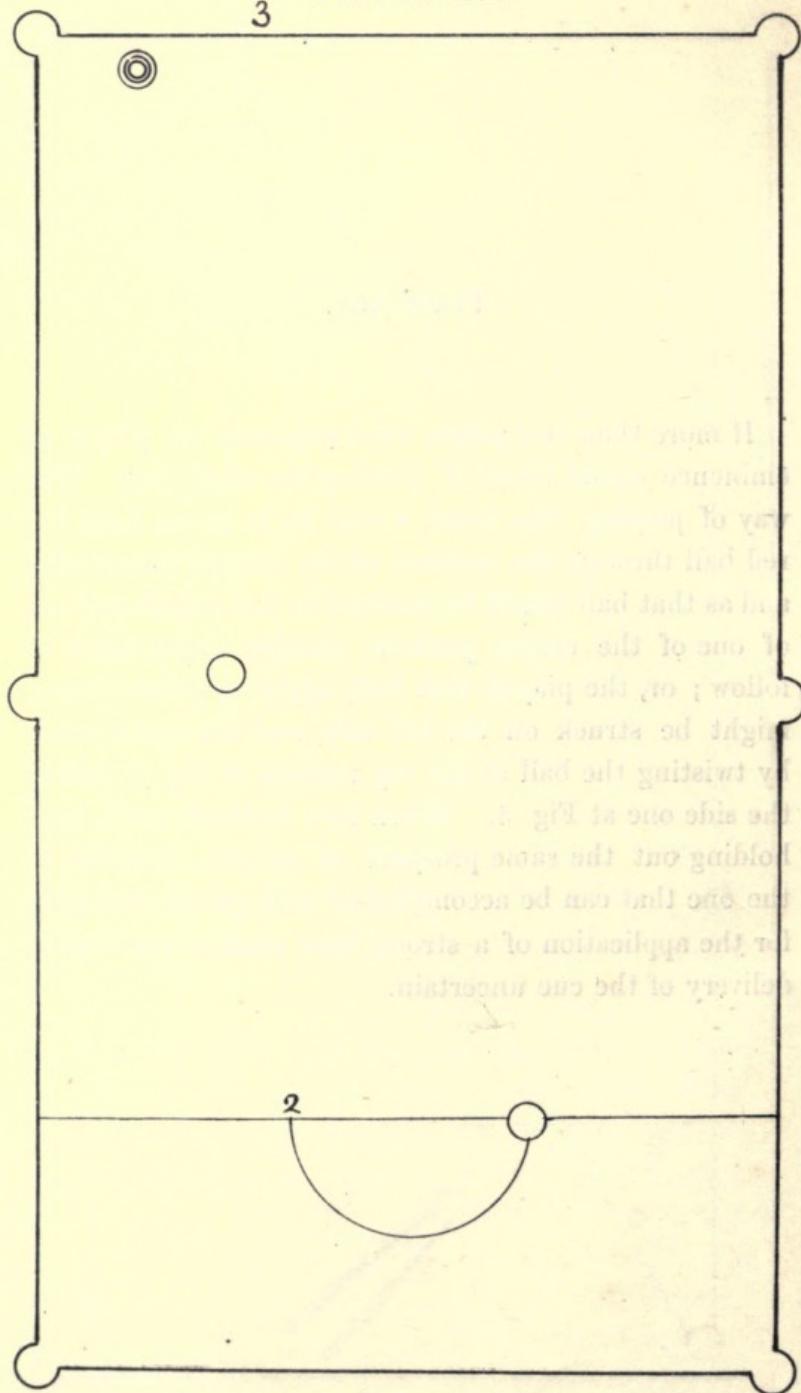


PLATE 102.

Balls were thus placed when a player of great execution required fifteen points to complete the game. The break appeared so promising, that I backed him to win it off the balls. To my great astonishment he placed his ball in that part of the baulk circle described in the diagram. The result I apprehended came to pass. Playing the stroke badly, the white ball struck the red, and both remained safe. Had the player placed his ball at Fig. 2, the one played upon, avoiding the red, would have taken the top cushion at Fig. 3, and have gone in and out of the baulk ; and, if played with proper strength, would have settled near the *centre* of the Table. The player *then*, commanding a losing hazard from the red ball, would have been in the possession of a most promising break. These remarks are worthy of some consideration. An excellent player, when contending against a Noble Earl, lost three important games, all of which could have been won had he placed his ball at Fig. 2. In fact whenever the red ball presents a losing hazard for the centre pocket, never play it with a strength that will only again bring it to the pocket, if the doing so is likely to place the ball near to the side cushion, but place your ball invariably in such a position that will carry the object ball in and out of the baulk and towards the *centre* of the Table, for thus placed the chances of scoring are multiplied. If in passing the baulk line the ball settles between that and the centre pockets, you have a certain hazard for the one or the other ; and if, pursuing the same direction, the ball passes the centre pocket, you will then have a certain score for one of the corners. Half my games are won by playing the losing hazard as now described, and keeping the red ball towards the centre of the Table.

PLATE 103

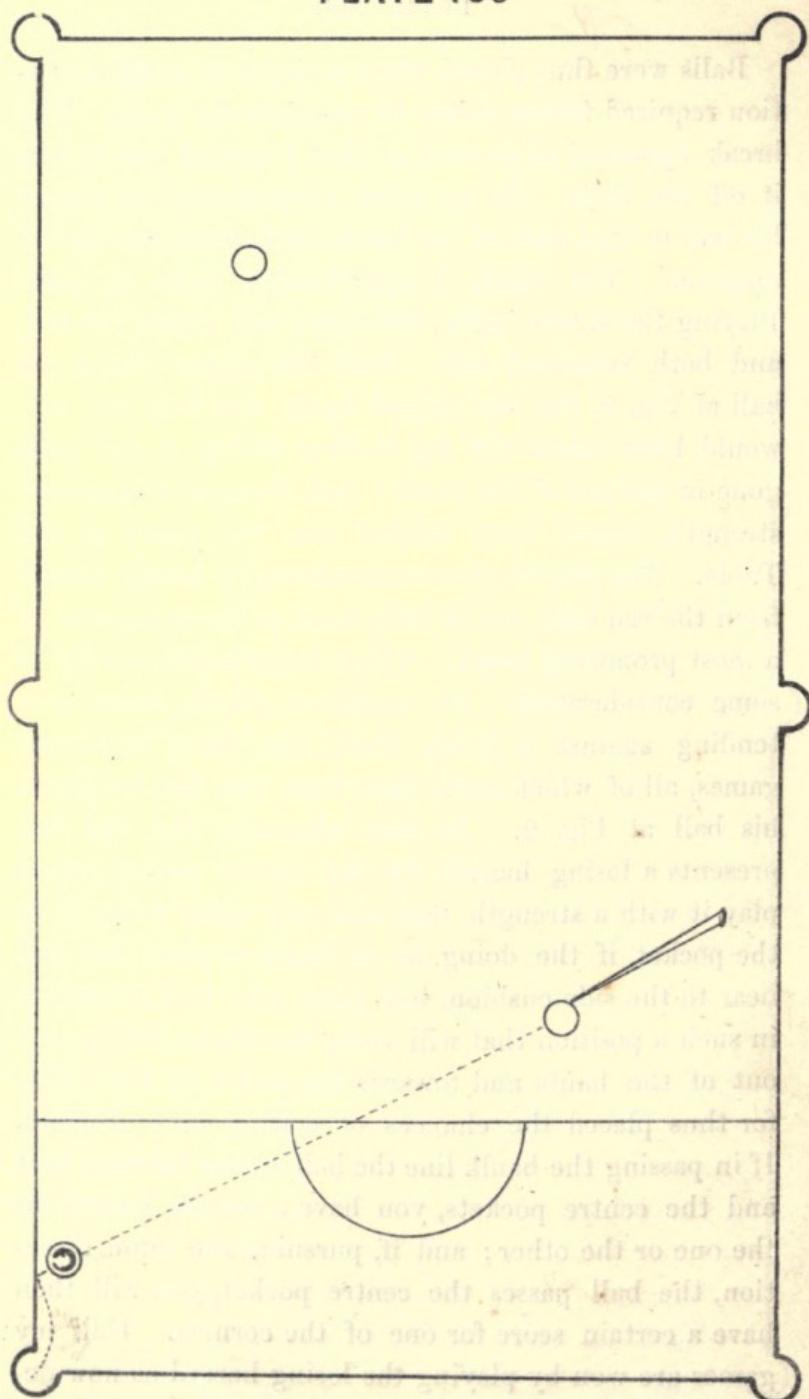


PLATE 103.

If the balls were thus situated, and the opponent within two or three points of winning the game, it would be useless for the player to hole his own ball from the red by the simple method of a cut ; for, by such play, the red ball would remain in the baulk. The losing hazard from the red ball, should be made by running through it ; the ball entering the pocket after it has struck the side cushion. By this method of play the red ball will not only be carried out of the baulk, but doubled to the direction of the white. In this stroke Mr. Roberts greatly excels, and although the hazard, from such an angle, is very difficult, I never saw him miss it. The generality of players would, from balls so placed, play for a canon from the white ; and the making it would be much easier than scoring from the red ball in the way described ; but Mr. Roberts has sense enough to know that a canon from several cushions leaves only a *doubtful* break. In the execution of this stroke the played-with ball must be struck very much above the centre.

PLATE 104
BEAUTIFUL TEN STROKE

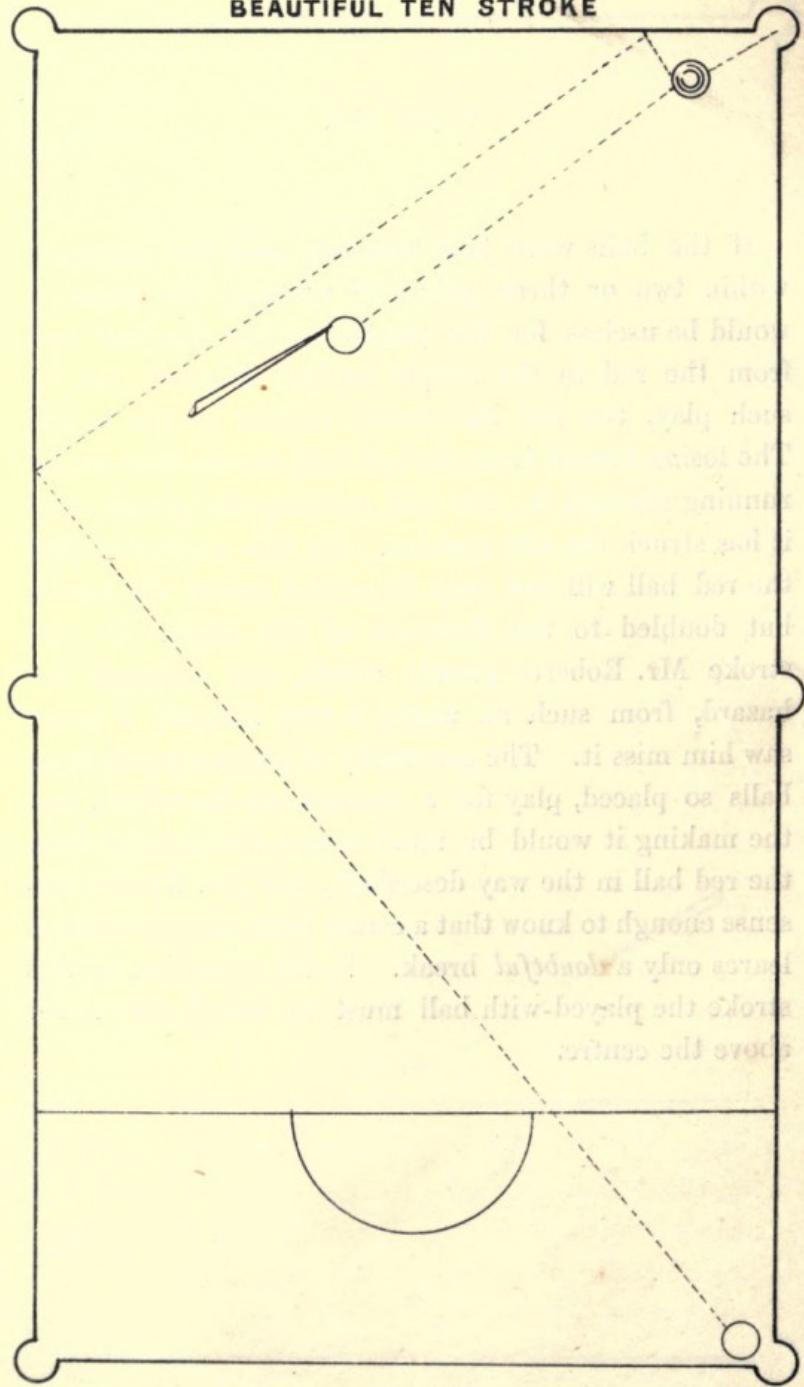


PLATE 104.

From the balls thus placed I saw a ten-stroke made twice in succession by a gentleman frequenting the Subscription Room in Manchester Street, Brighton. It is a pretty stroke to witness, and it may be performed by any one capable of hitting the played-with ball sufficiently on the side. As only moderate strength is necessary, it will afford good practice. There will be, to young players, an advantage in practising a stroke of this description, for if, after repeated trials, they find it cannot be accomplished, they may rest satisfied that the ball, in the delivery of the cue, was not struck upon the part where aim was taken. Such an inability must be overcome. The direction, or progress of a ball when really struck on its side cannot err.

PLATE 105

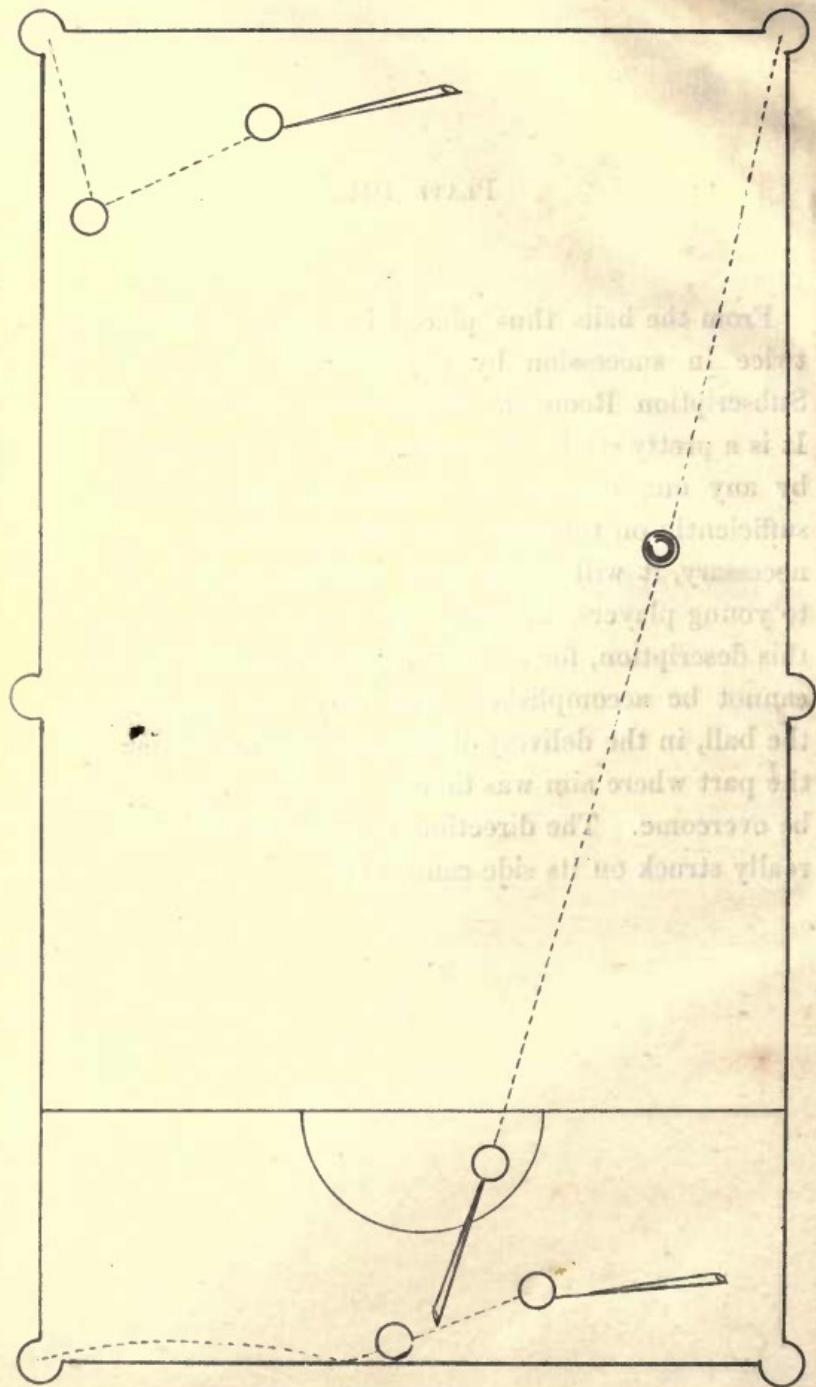


PLATE 105.

Attention has been called to the difficulty of long winning hazard striking, and I have stated that to hole the red ball, as now placed, in the corner pocket, three times in ten attempts was as much as Mr. Kentfield would undertake to perform. In Brighton, upon a Table in St. James's Street, with small pockets, I saw Mr. John Barnes hole the ball, now described in the plate, five times in succession ; seven times in ten strokes, and fifteen times in one-and-thirty ! The losing hazard for the opposite pocket, by the twist, I also saw him accomplish seven times in succession. The losing hazard for the left hand corner pocket in the baulk, through the medium of the side stroke, I also saw him make fourteen times without a failure ! Such hazard striking upon a Table with small pockets, is unprecedented, and, perhaps, will never be surpassed ; yet to hazard striking so extraordinary Mr. Roberts has given thirty points in a hundred ! As education perfects the intelligence derived from the Almighty, so a knowledge of the game enables the player of genius to carry out all that his abilities suggest.

PLATE 106

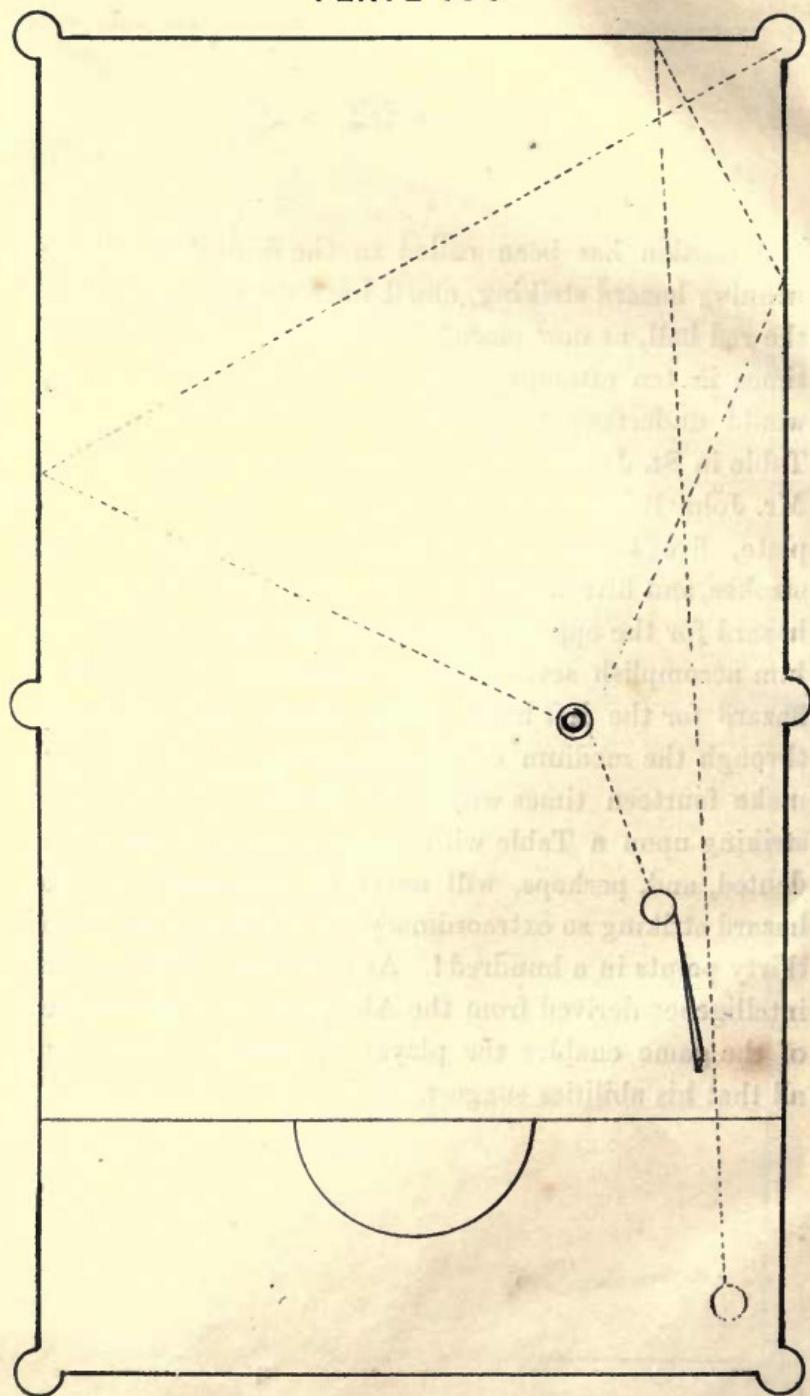


PLATE 106.

This is a very beautiful stroke, and in playing the game of "one pocket to five" would be highly beneficial. In fact canons, similar to the one now exhibited, should be practised, for it frequently occurs that the playing for them through the medium of the counter side stroke enables the player to double the ball of his opponent either for a pocket or close to a cushion; and when thus situated the best of players play to a disadvantage. If such a method of play is advanced against yourself, never attempt the score if uncertain; give a miss, and, if practicable, leave yourself a hazard from the red ball.

PLATE 107

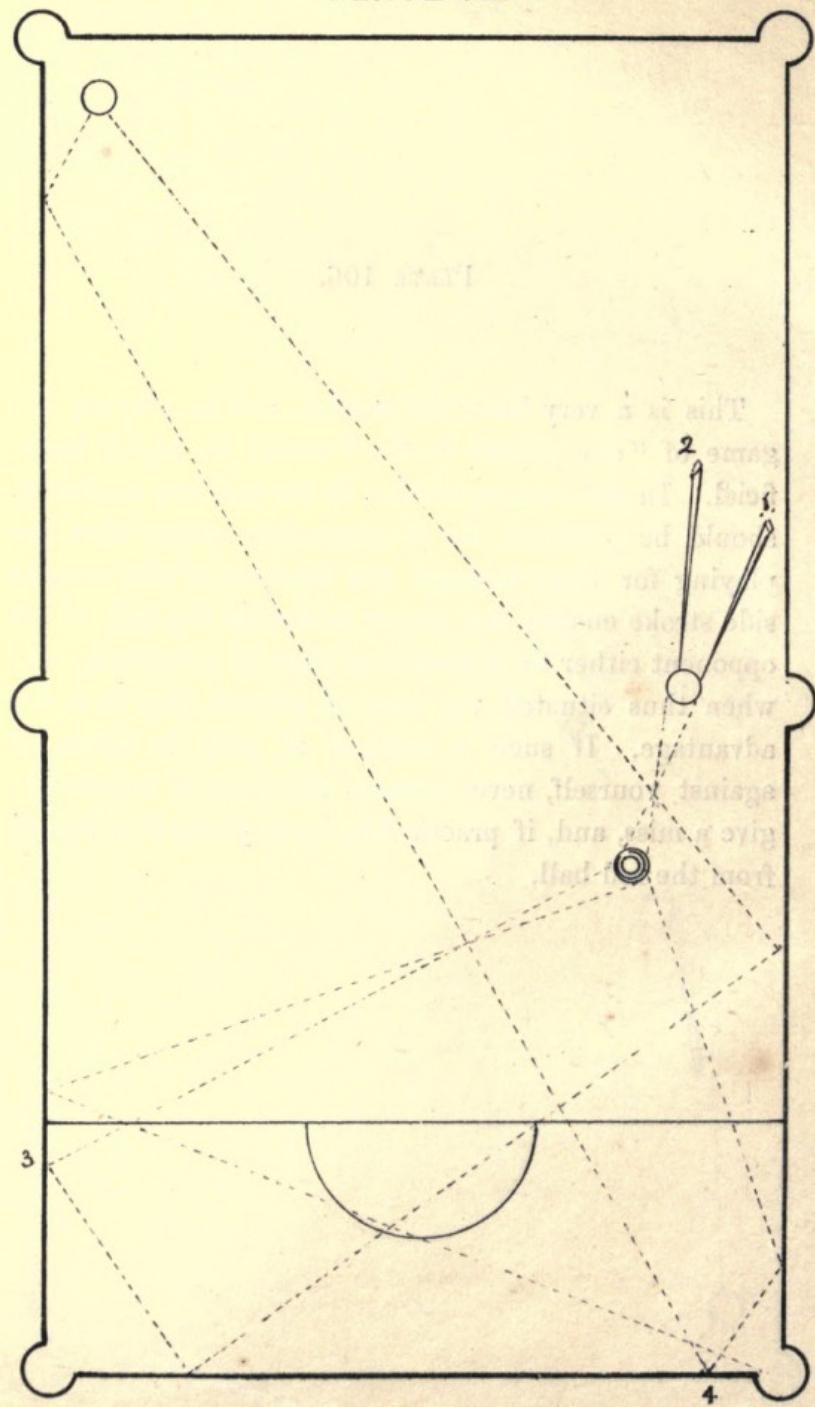


PLATE 107.

I have endeavoured to shew that hard hitting, if not entirely uncalled for, is at all events quite unnecessary. I have likewise endeavoured to convince those deprived of the power of great muscular exertion that everything connected with the science of the game can be accomplished with gentle strength. It has also been my object to prove that even fine hazard striking is not essential ! The present diagram will illustrate both assertions.

The white ball is supposed to be within six inches of the corner pocket, presenting a common winning hazard. My winning hazard striking is so imperfect that I should not even venture to play at such a ball, though the two points would finish the game. I should, though perhaps strange to say, play for a canon. The easiest way of making it would be from the cue marked 1, taking the right hand side cushion at Fig. 3, playing with a side-stroke from the left of the played-with ball. From the cue marked 2, the ball must be finely cut, taking the side cushion, and the lower cushion at Fig. 4. That method has the recommendation of combining defence, for should the canon be missed the ball of the opponent will be doubled so near to the cushion by the corner pocket in the baulk, that the chance of scoring would be against the next player. Ere this diagram was made I played the stroke in the presence of a good professional player, and requested him to play from the white ball thus left. He did so, and failed in making a score.

PLATE 108

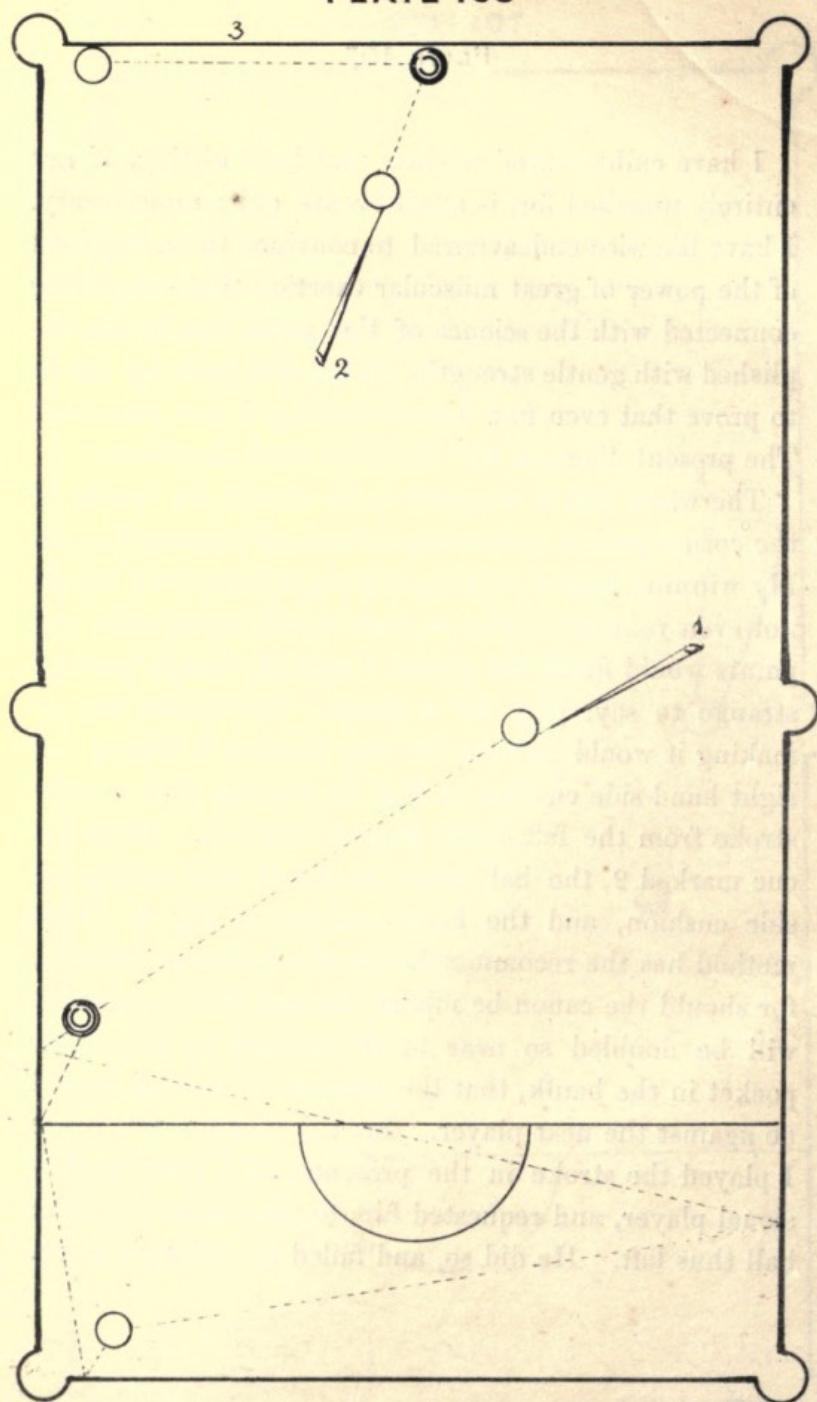


PLATE 108.

My object is not to shew the easiest method of scoring, but the way that will lead to a succession of hazards. If the canon from the cue marked 1, was played from the red ball direct upon the white there would be a chance of the player's ball entering the pocket after the canon had been made, in which case the red ball being necessarily doubled into the baulk, the score might not only be at an end, but the position of the balls probably against the striker. The mode of playing, leading to a prospect of great results, would be to walk through the red ball and canon from the side and lower cushion, doubling the red ball in that direction. The played-with ball is struck on the left side. From the cue marked 2 a canon can be effected through the medium of a twist, combined with the counter side-stroke, and from balls even thus placed I have seen Mr. Roberts make a run of forty or fifty points. The holeing of the white ball would be useless. The stroke is, strictly speaking, not very difficult, for the counter side-stroke, obliging the played-with ball to cling to the cushion, renders the canon a certainty, should the played-with ball even take the cushion at Fig. 3, multiplying, consequently, the dimensions of the ball to at least six times its size.

PLATE 109

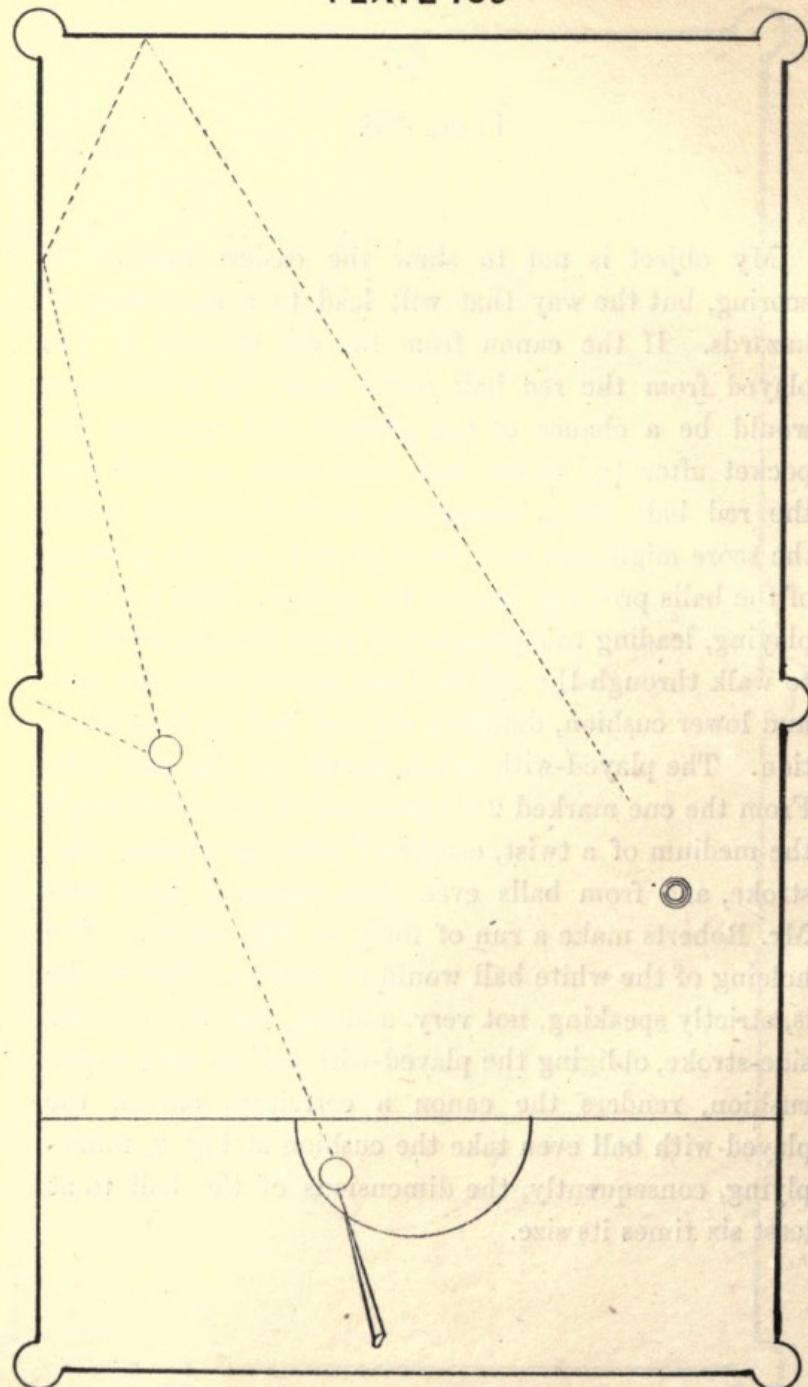


PLATE 109.

The red ball not presenting a losing hazard, called a Jenny, the player, being in hand, should let it remain, since the holeing it in a small centre pocket would be uncertain. If moved, it would be better to attempt a losing hazard for the right hand corner pocket through the medium of the counter side-stroke, for, if made with gentle strength, the break would be very promising. I recommend, however, the converting the white winning hazard into a losing one by walking through the ball, taking it to the neighbourhood of the red. The hazard now suggested is one of some difficulty, and requires practice; but if players had witnessed, as I have, the extraordinary games that have been won by the stroke, they would be convinced of its importance, and would endeavour, by application, to reap the advantages that always ensue from the capability of making it.

PLATE 110

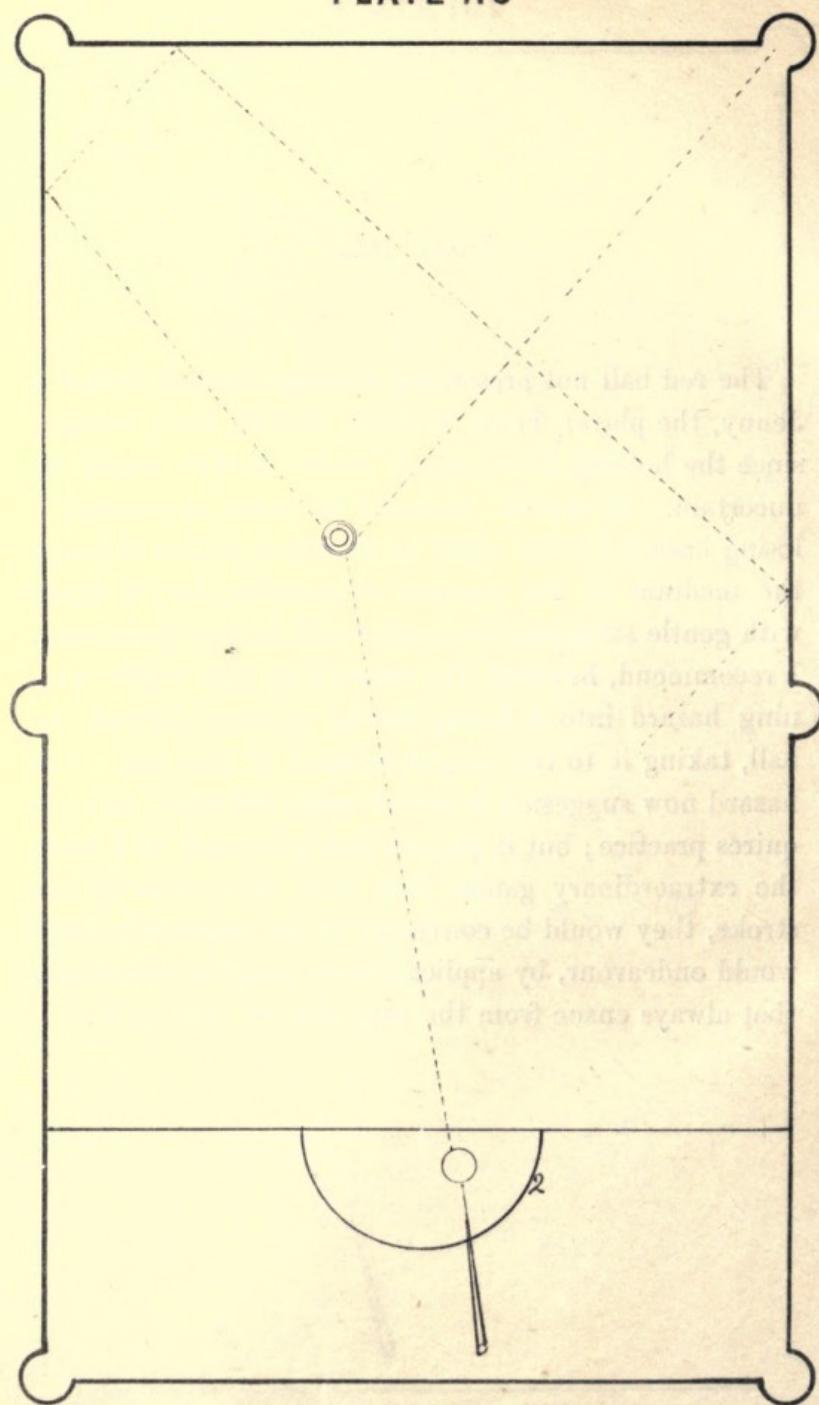


PLATE 110.

From the red ball as now placed I have seen Mr. Roberts win some extraordinary games; and it might even to myself be most productive. The generality of young players, if in hand, place the ball in that part of the half circle that holds out the fairest prospect of making a six stroke. If they succeed, the red ball when re-spotted is safe, unless the ball of the opponent presents a canon. The proper method is to place the played-with ball at Fig. 2, and to play for a losing hazard in the right hand corner pocket, taking care that the red ball be made to take the left hand side cushion at the part that will carry it over the centre pocket, for, from such a position, the player of good strengths will win the game. I wish upon the present occasion, as I have done on many others, to impress upon the mind of the learner of the game that the hazard presented must be at all times so played that the prospect of another score will follow. The power of the game depends upon it, and with that capability an inferior hazard striker can become most formidable.

PLATE III

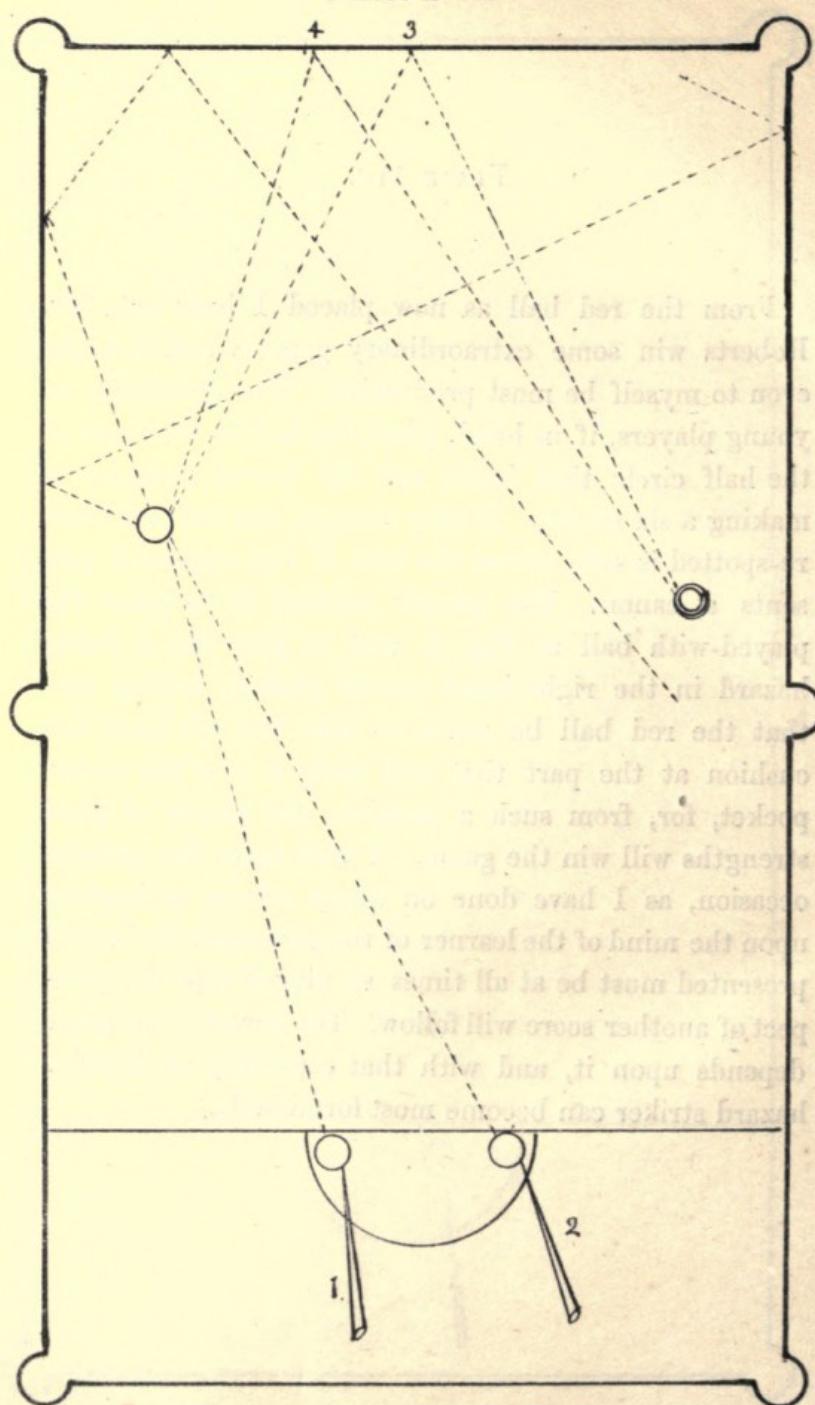


PLATE III.

I have recommended that the game should be played in accordance with the score ; and the present plate is intended as an illustration. If I had a backward game and required a promising break to assist me, I should, being in hand, play the ball as described from Fig. 1, by which method the white ball is taken to the position of the red, and, by canoning gently on that ball, the three are left together. If my game was much advanced I should adopt a system of defence, and play for the canon after the manner described in Fig. 2, by which means, the ball of the opponent being doubled close to the top cushion, the chances would be against his scoring should the canon be missed. The played-with ball from the cue marked Fig. 1, takes the top cushion at Fig. 3, and the ball from the cue marked 2, takes the cushion at Fig. 4, the side-stroke taking it towards the red ball.

PLATE II2

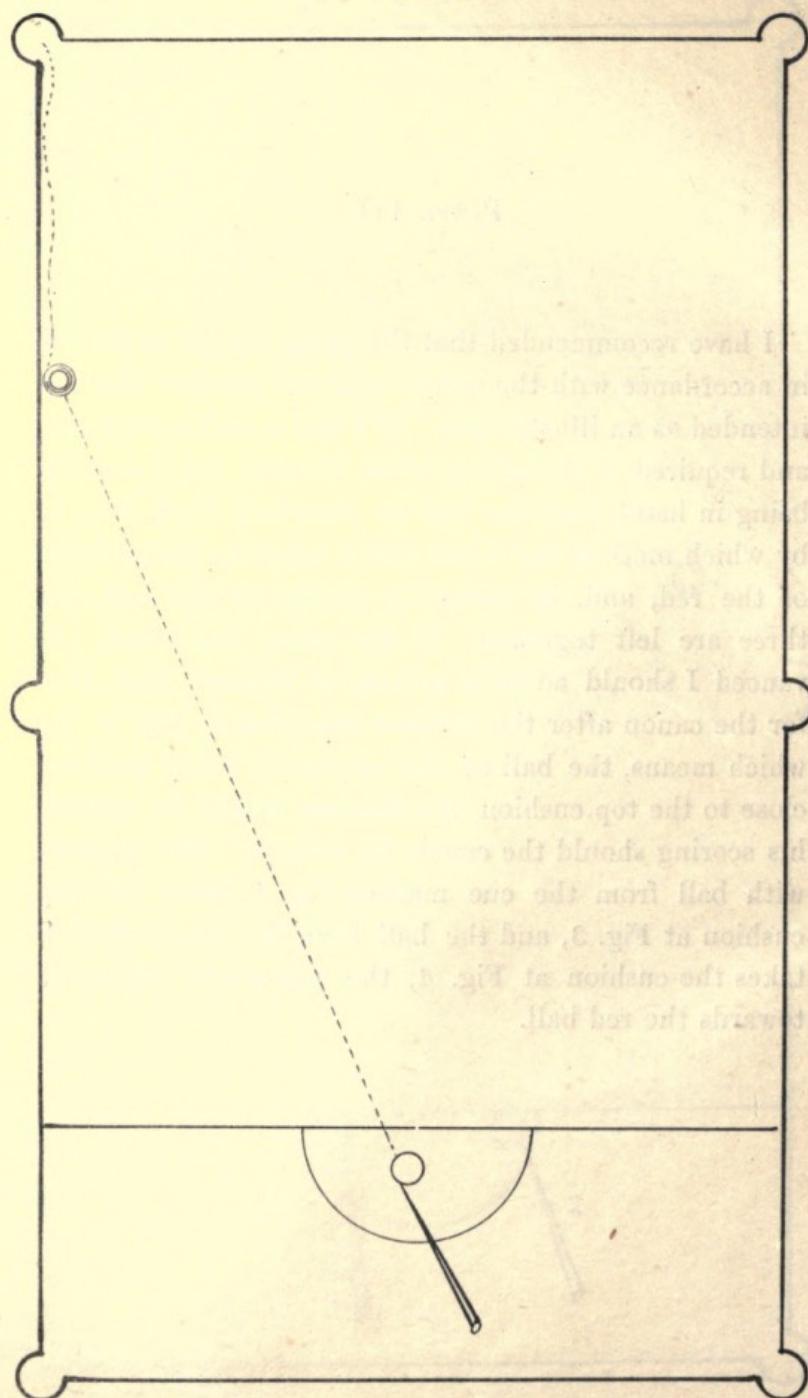


PLATE 112.

In a former page will be found remarks connected with the formation of the bridge. I will now assign a reason why the recommendation should meet with attention. I perceived, a few days since, a gentleman trying to hole the played-with ball in the corner pocket through the medium of the side-stroke.. He made repeated attempts, but did not, on any occasion, strike the ball upon the part to which he had pointed his cue. His bridge was formed by placing the thumb close to the forefinger, and the cue, being delivered with force, deviated in its progress, and thus frustrated his intention. Pointing out the reason why he could not hit the ball upon its side, I placed my hand upon the Table, and shewed him the bridge I had recommended all players to adopt, and, in the course of five minutes, with the bridge so constructed, he not only hit his ball on the part required, but actually made the hazard several times. He will not again allow the thumb to press against the forefinger.

PLATE 113

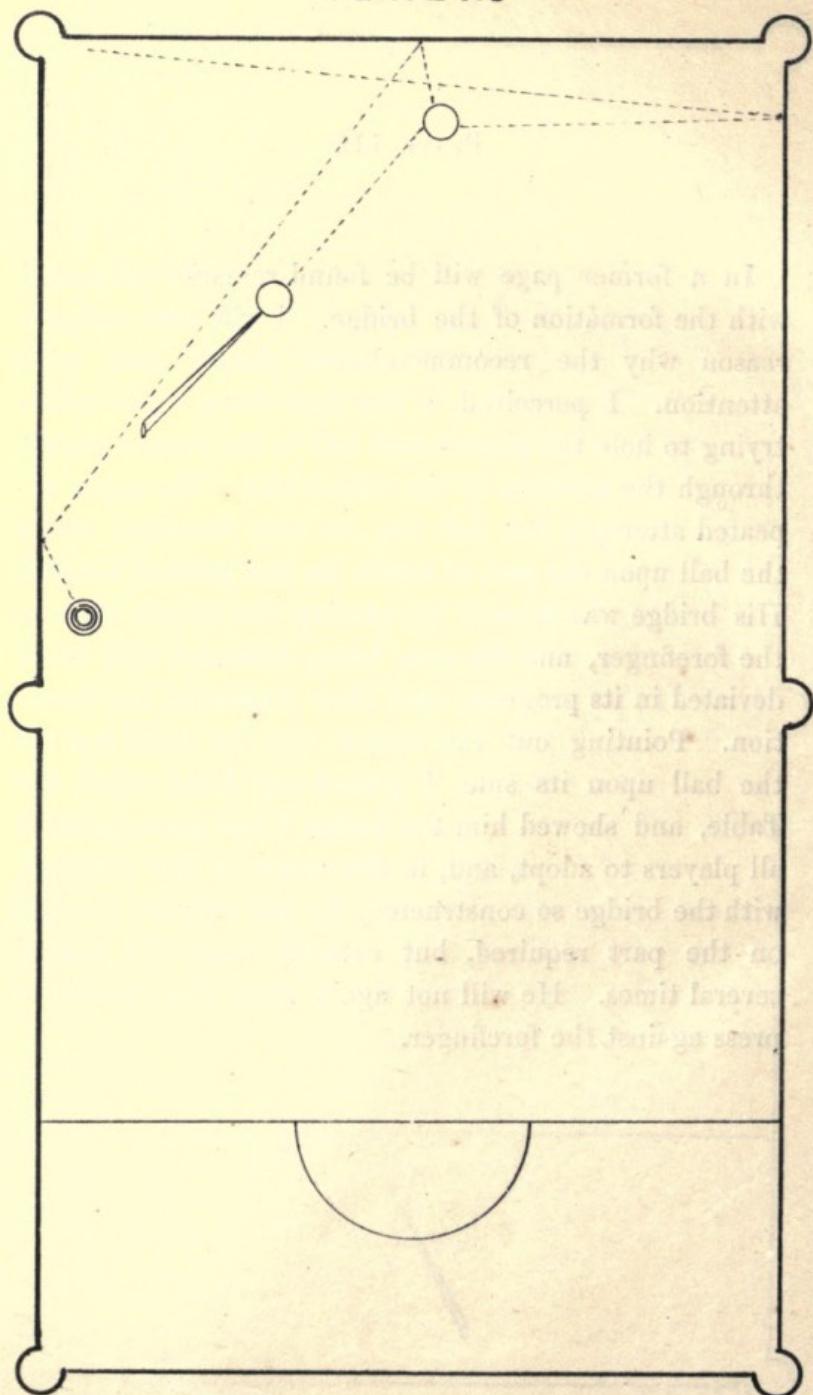


PLATE 113.

I saw a fine hazard striker lose a game of great importance when he required but eight points to complete it. He holed the white ball in the right hand corner pocket and canoned; but the red ball, after the canon was made, did not present a score, and a baulk could not be made. Had the player been satisfied by making the canon with gentle strength, after the manner now described, the white ball would have been doubled to the opposite corner pocket, and the red left over the centre one; and from such a break, the winning of the game must have followed. The diagram is exhibited to shew the folly of slapping in the ball of the opponent at a railway pace, when the doing so, even if combined with a canon, leaves the balls in safety.

PLATE II4

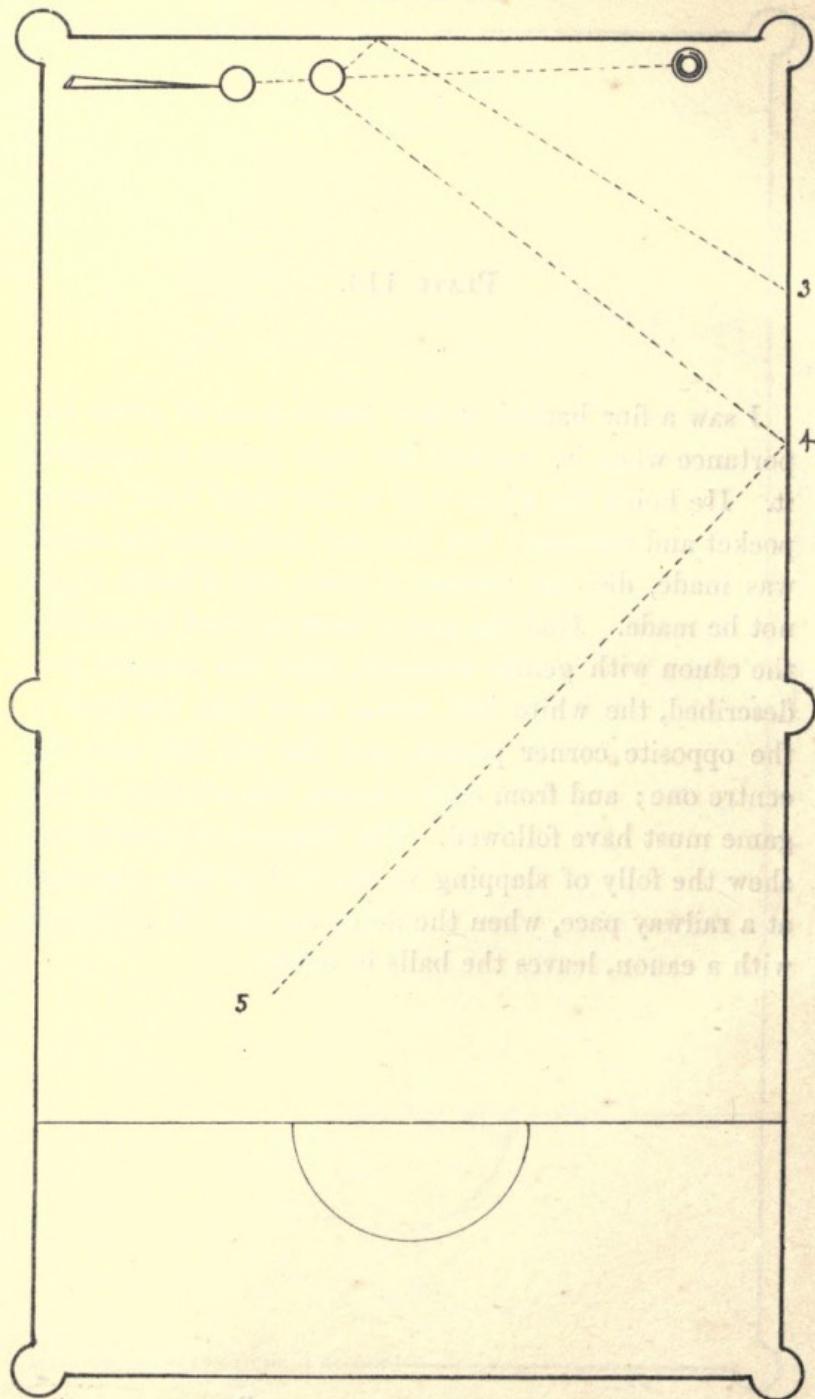


PLATE 114.

The balls were thus placed when the players were 23 all, and a great stake depending on the game. The striker, labouring under considerable excitement, dashed full at the white ball, imagining that the clashing of the three balls near the corner pocket would produce a score. He was mistaken, and lost the game. Had he permitted discretion and defence to have reigned, he would, in all probability, have won it; for by placing the ball of his opponent under the side cushion at Fig. 3, his own, taking the cushion at Fig. 4, would have travelled in the direction of Fig. 5, and the balls, thus situated, would have been greatly against the next player. If men box, or contend with foils, they shift, feint, dodge about, and exert, in short, every faculty of the *mind* to insure an opening, or gain an advantage; if, therefore, adversaries, measuring their prowess, seek, by various manœuvres, to save their "nobs" and find protection for their ribs, why should not opponents, when engaged at Billiards, endeavour to increase their fame by similar acts of caution, defence, and judgment.

PLATE 115

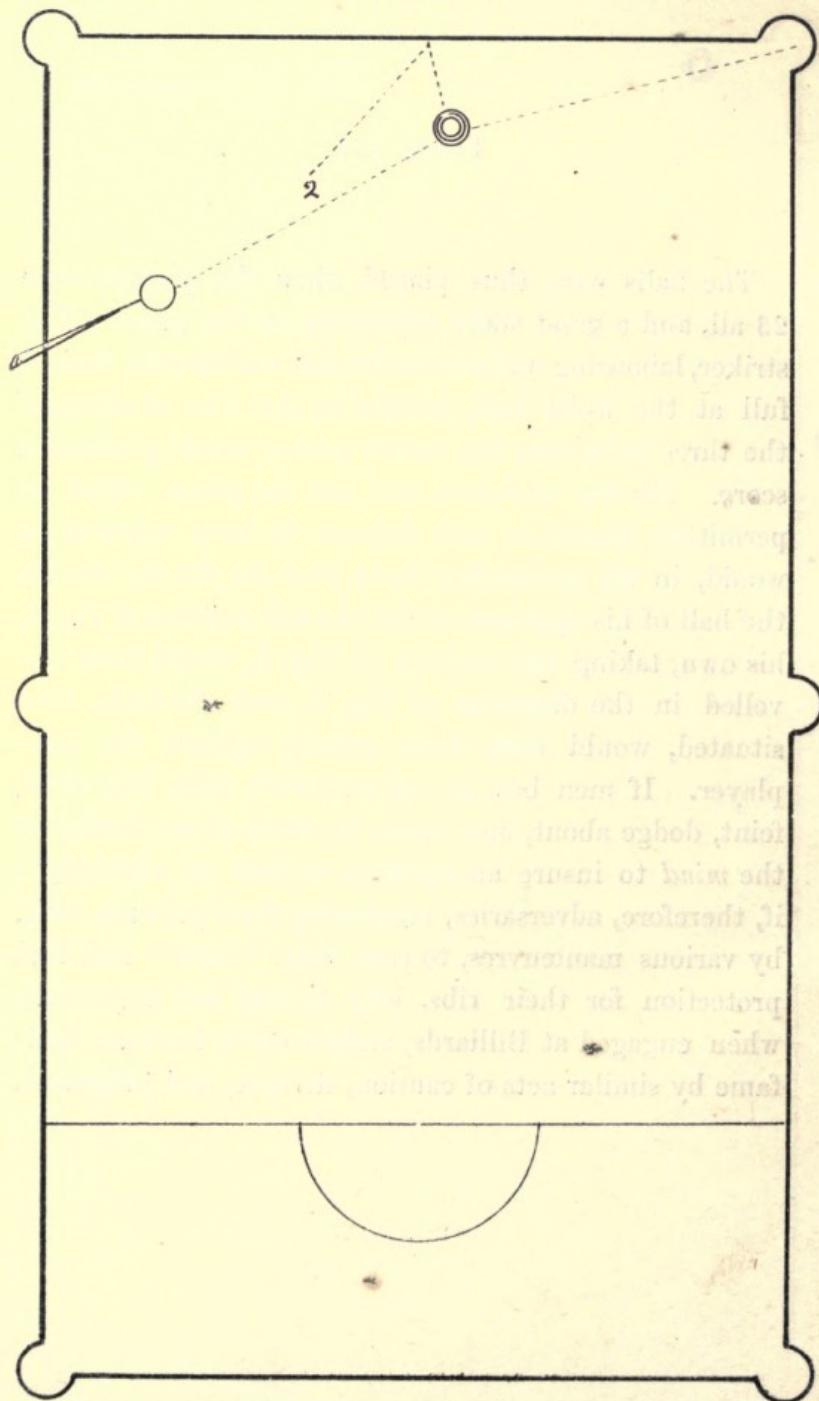


PLATE 115.

The making of a hazard, however clever the performance, without leaving, by judicious strength, another score, is useless. It is, in short, "wasting a sweetness on the desert air." The red ball, as now placed, does not carry with it a very promising appearance; and, if the ball of the opponent was in hand, few players would venture to touch it. Prudence would command a miss in the baulk. From playing at such a ball, when over-bumptious, I have been frequently punished, but, nevertheless, if a ball so placed was left to Mr. Roberts, his opponent in all probability, would see no more of the game. The stroke would be played as described. The played-with ball by being struck on the left side would on leaving the top cushion incline in the direction of Fig. 2; and the application of good strength would place it there. The spot stroke would be then obtained, and from it Mr. Roberts would probably score a hundred points! The members of a London Club invited this extraordinary player to their room, and when there he was requested to play the spot stroke. Upon inquiring how he acquitted himself, I received the following answer: "He went on making hazard after hazard, till we were tired of seeing him do it."

PLATE II6

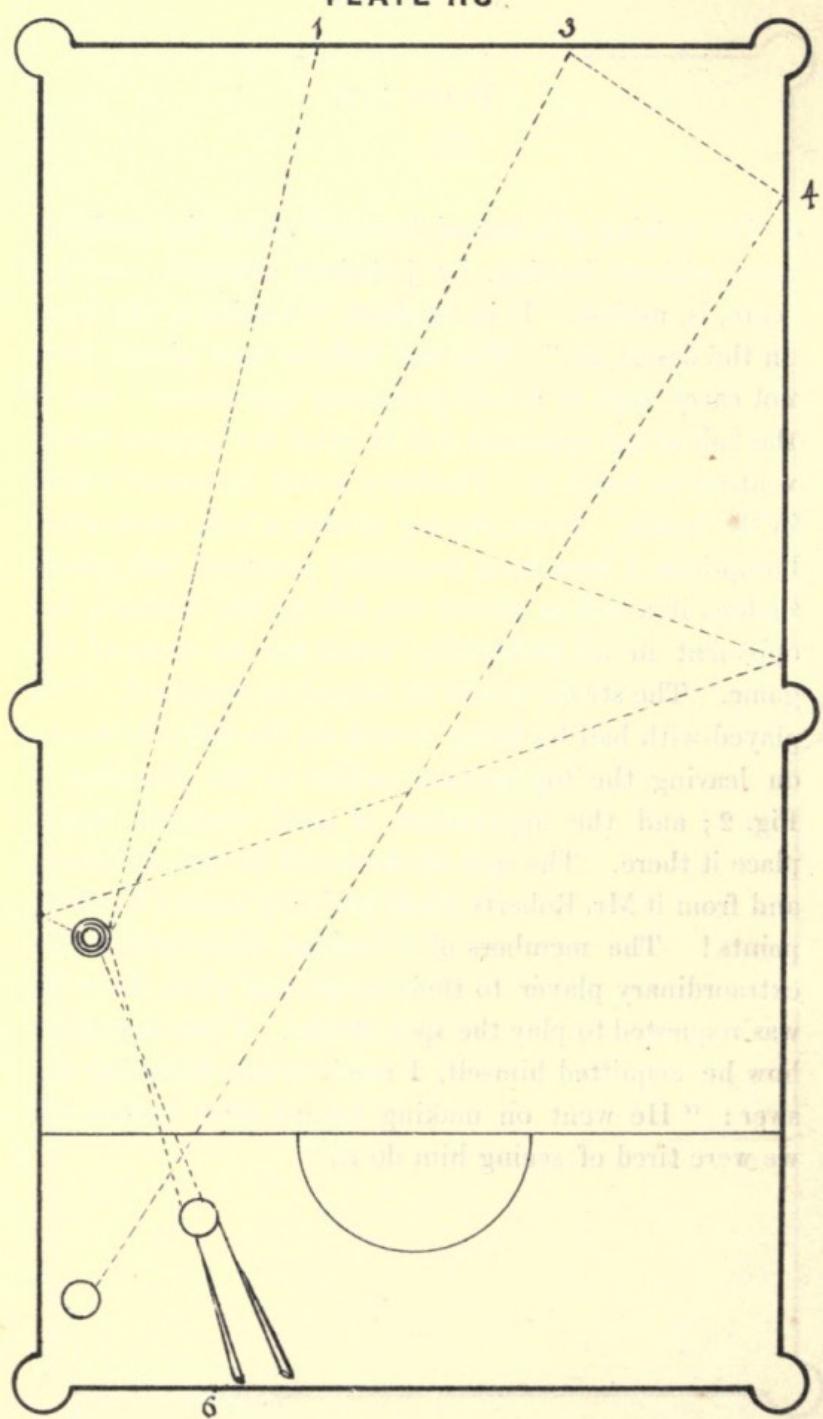


PLATE 116.

The canon now displayed will shew the difference in action between the side stroke from the right side of the ball, and the counter side stroke from the left. Played either way the red ball ought to be placed in a favourable position, holding out the prospect of a good run. From the counter side stroke, canoning direct from the top cushion at Fig. 1, the red ball can be nicely doubled for the centre pocket, or its vicinity, presenting consequently another score. From the side stroke to the right, touching the cushions at 3 and 4, the red ball may be doubled from the side cushion on the left to the side cushion on the right, and reflected from thence to the centre of the Table; and if the canon should leave a losing hazard from the white ball, the break would be most promising. Situated as the white ball now is, the chances of scoring are increased when played with the side stroke from the right of the ball, for, taking its course from Fig. 4, the ball may enter the corner pocket if the canon be missed, and even should the played-with ball cushion rather beyond the Fig. 4 the canon can be accomplished from the lower cushion at Fig. 6, therefore in all situations when a pocket is available, in case the canon should be missed, the method of play should embrace the double chance, for when either ball is placed near to a pocket without masking it, the pocket and the assistance of the cushions, multiplies the size of the ball to the dimensions of a loaf !

PLATE 117

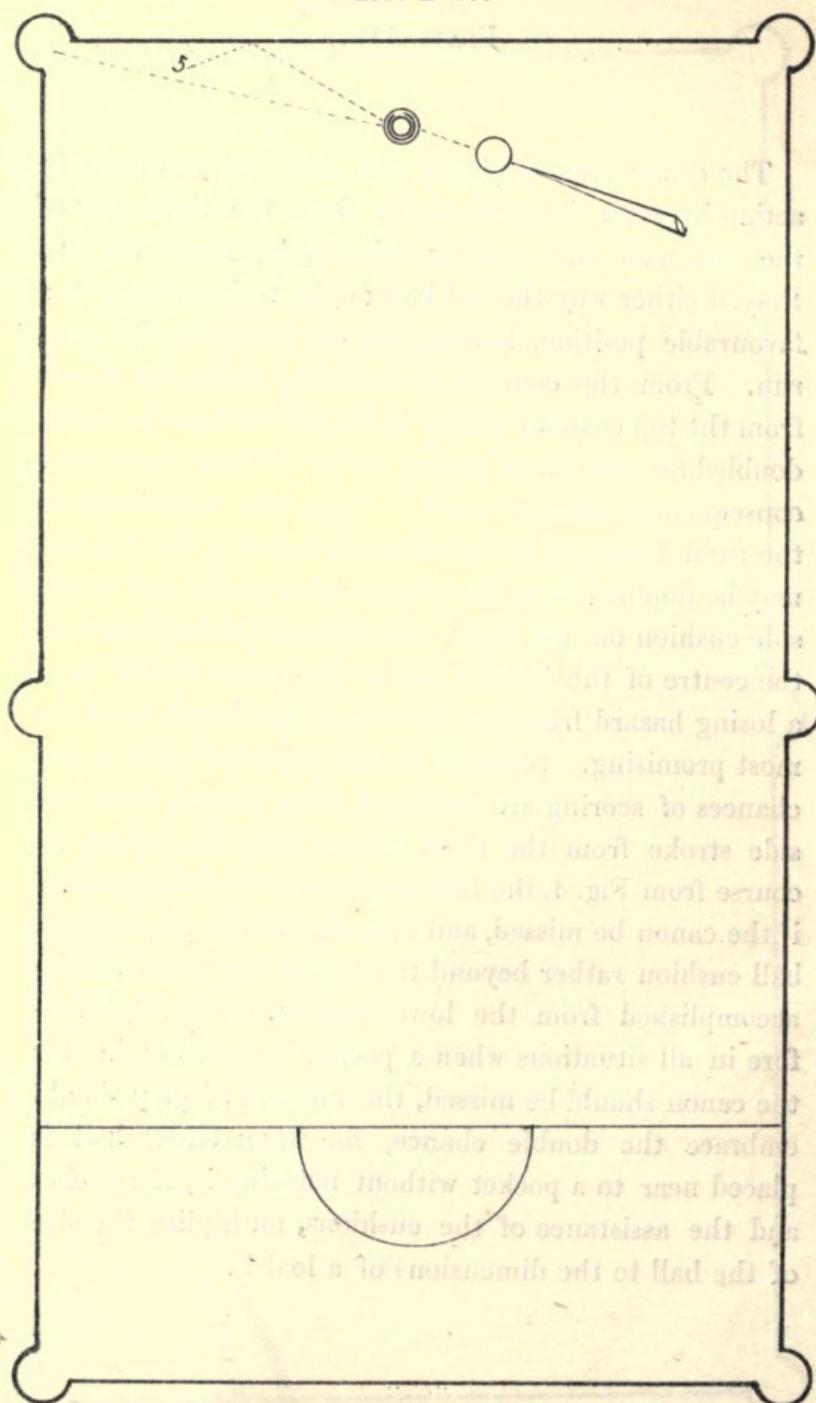


PLATE 117.

The benefit resulting from being enabled to play the spot stroke to advantage has been already pointed out, and a diagram exhibited shewing the method of playing it in all its positions; but as some strokes require the application of force, the difficulty and uncertainty of holeing the ball upon a Table with small pockets becomes great, and frequently foils even the best of hazard strikers. I have devoted hours to the stroke, and I find from balls placed as they are now represented that it is better to abandon the desire of obtaining another winning hazard, and to rest satisfied with a losing one. By playing the hazard gently, and placing the played-with ball at Fig. 5, the player will command an easy losing hazard for the corner pocket, and the strength requisite for its accomplishment will place the red ball over the centre one. From the red ball so placed the 24 points ought to be completed. Endeavour on all occasions to place the red ball so that it may present a losing hazard for a middle pocket, for, if in hand, when the red ball is thus situated, you ought to consider the game as won.

PLATE 118

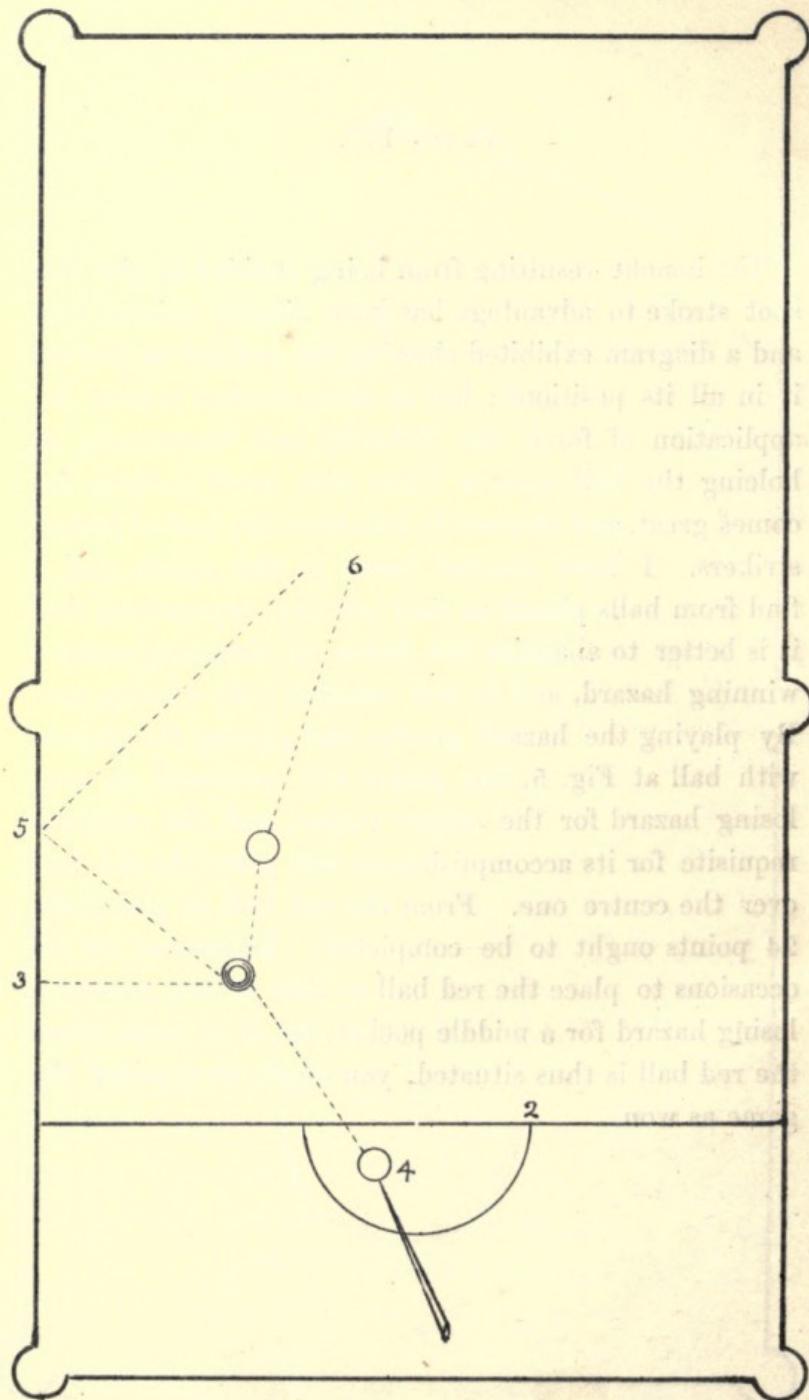


PLATE 118.

The advantages derived from keeping the three balls together have been already declared. The present diagram is presented that the memory may be refreshed, and the importance of this mode of play further shewn. If the canon now about to be played was made in the easiest method from Fig. 2, the object ball, cushioning at Fig. 3, would be separated from the ball of the opponent; but if the striker, being, of course in hand, places his ball at Fig. 4, and canons through the medium of the side stroke, the ball played upon will cushion at Fig. 5, and take a position close to the other ball, placed by the canon at Fig. 6; thus situated, the balls should be similarly nursed, and the game, 24 up, completed. The power possessed by Mr. Kentfield and Mr. Roberts is derived from the placing of the ball, when in hand, so as to insure a favourable break.

PLATE 119

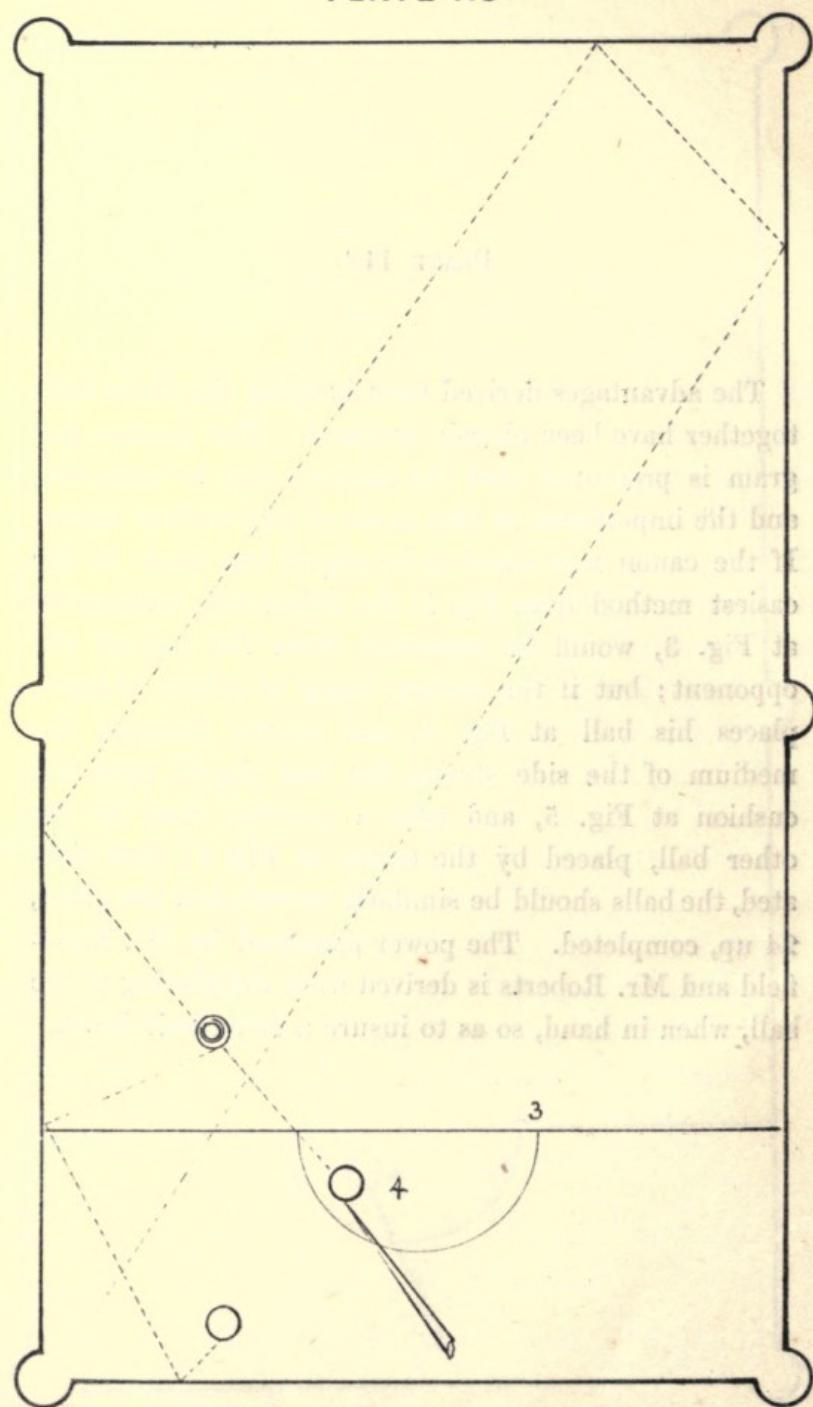
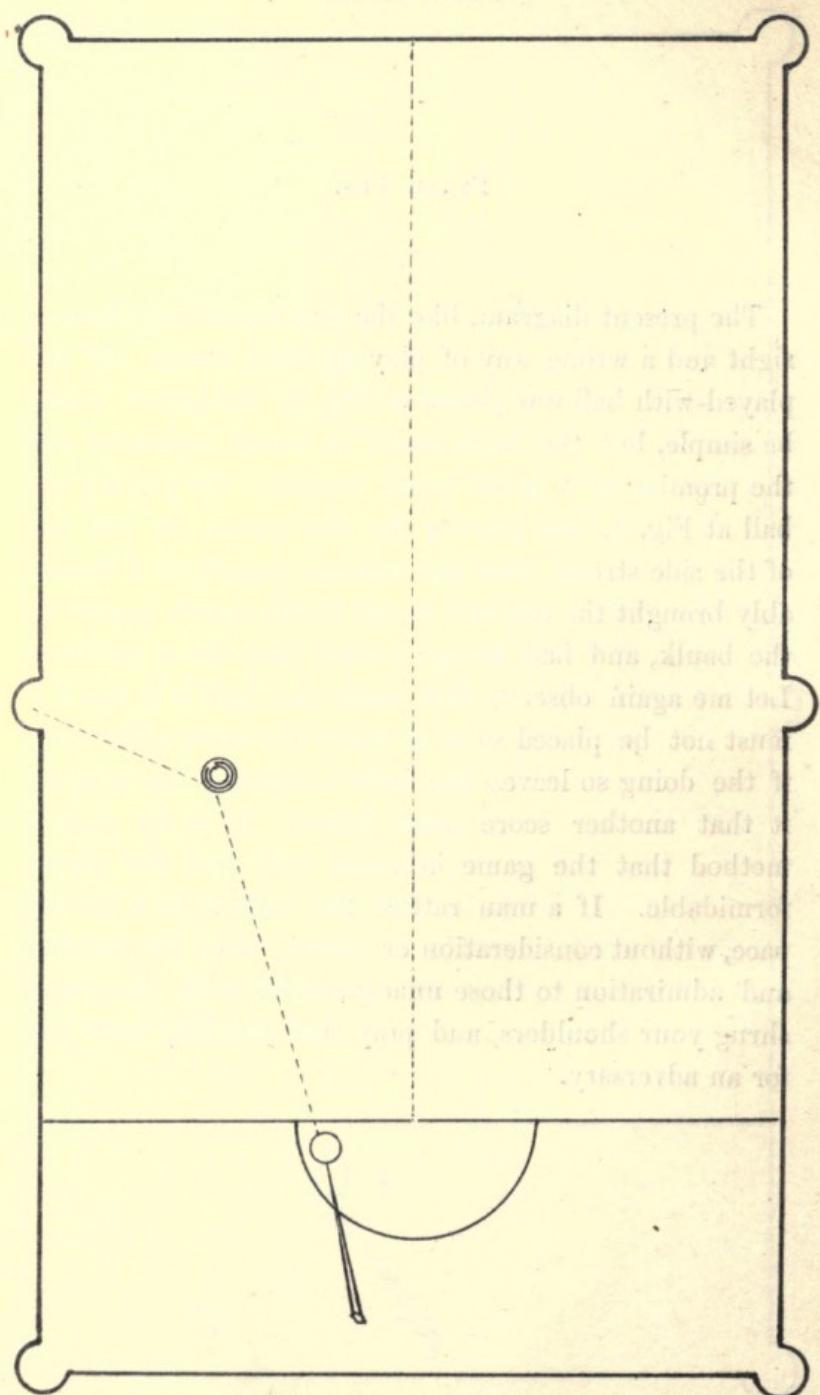


PLATE 119.

The present diagram, like the one preceding, shews a right and a wrong way of playing for a canon. If the played-with ball was placed at Fig. 3, the canon would be simple, but the balls would be widely separated and the promise of a good break remote. By placing my ball at Fig. 4, and playing for the canon, by the use of the side stroke, after the manner described, I invariably brought the red ball round to the corner pocket in the baulk, and had always a score that led to another. Let me again observe that when the ball is in hand it must not be placed so as to make the score quite easy, if the doing so leaves the balls in safety; but so place it that another score must follow. It is by such a method that the game becomes easy and the player formidable. If a man rattles the balls in at a railway pace, without consideration or reason, leave the surprise and admiration to those unacquainted with the game, shrug your shoulders, and pray that you may have him for an adversary.

PLATE I20



A Proprietor of Billiard Rooms anxious for the improvement of his son, and conscious of the importance of the hazard now defined, allotted to him the following daily task. He was to hole the played-with ball in the left hand centre pocket eight times in succession without permitting the ball played upon to pass to the right of the line drawn down the centre of the Table. At that period, when the pockets were large and the cloth coarse, the completion of the number was not, perhaps, a very great performance ; but its accomplishment upon a modern Table with small pockets would be a task of considerable difficulty. Once, after much practice, I succeeded in performing it ; but the undertaking is really so great that it was abandoned by a professional player of great merit after a few trials ; and even Mr. Kentfield—stripped for the work—completed but seven hazards, after fagging at the stroke for five hours ! The stroke, however, is strongly recommended as one really worth the trouble it may occasion, for, in order to keep the ball to the left of the line, many hazards must be played with a *walk*, and the making of the hazard in that manner constitutes the difficulty ; but when the player has, by practice, overcome it, and finds, when playing the game, *both* pockets at his command, he will seldom fail in obtaining a long run from the red ball when placed in a position so desirable.

PLATE 121

025 8745

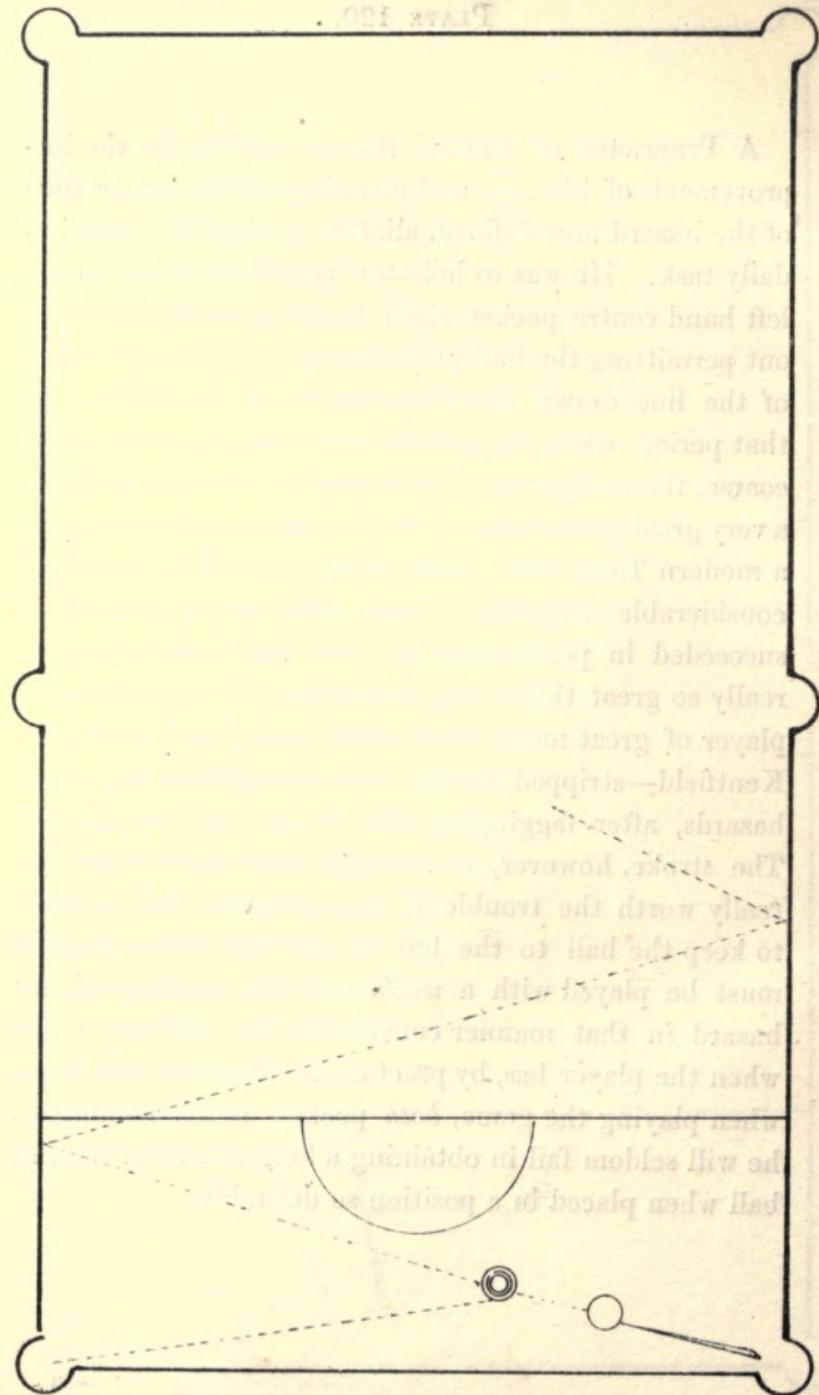


PLATE 121.

It frequently occurs, when the game is desperate, that a stroke somewhat out of the common way must be attempted, and from the one now exhibited I have often won a game that appeared all but lost. By walking the played-with ball, through the medium of the side stroke, into the corner pocket, the red ball takes a position extremely favourable, and if the hazard represented in the preceding plate can be effectually played, a great run will follow. If I can avoid it I never play any other game than the one of 24 up, and I patiently await the opportunity of placing the red ball over a centre pocket; once there, I care very little for the score of my opponent. The spot stroke, and a canon when the three balls are close together, present, also, great resources, and they should be practised till 24 points can be made from each position.

PLATE 122

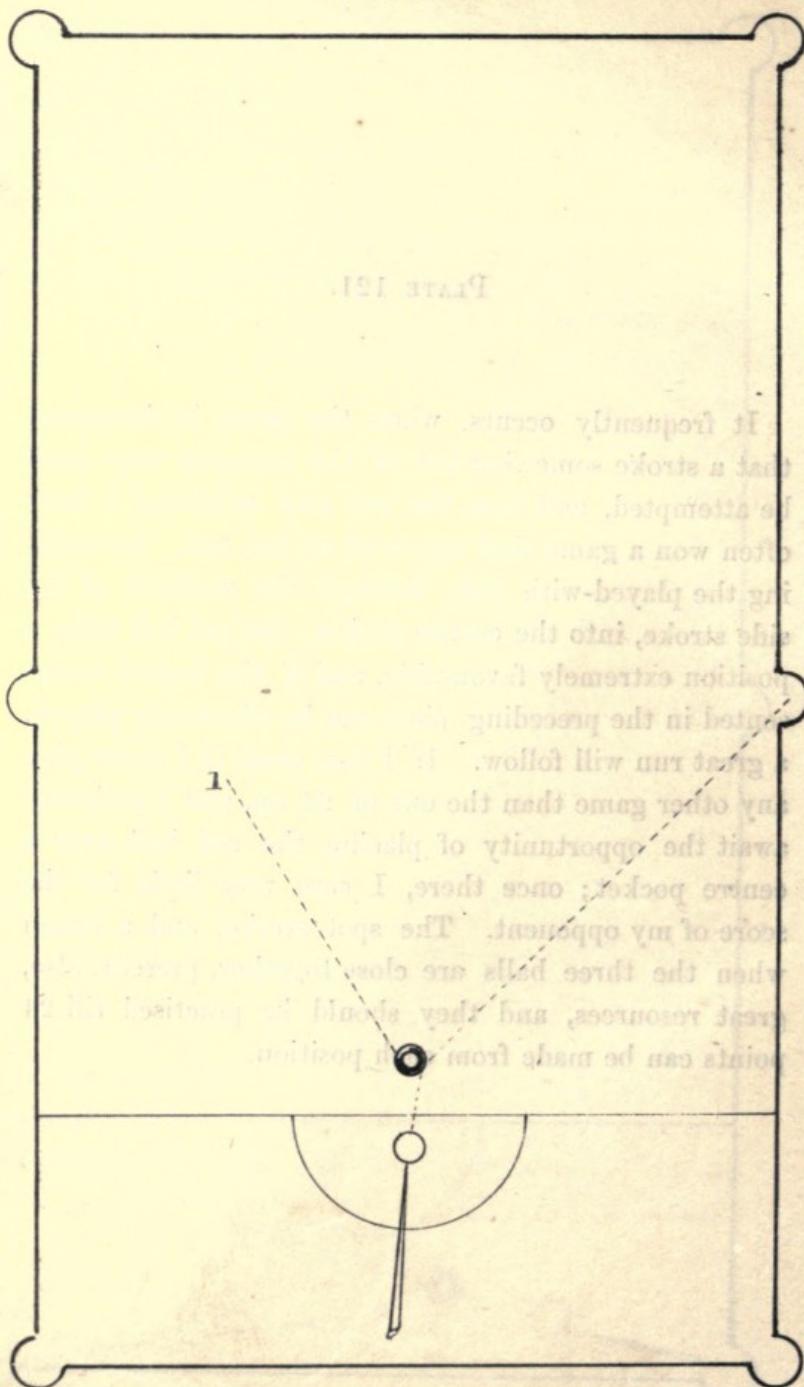


PLATE 122.

When the red ball is about four or five inches out of the baulk and the player in hand, he ought to win the game from the ball. Play to hole the played-with ball in the centre pocket through the medium of a fine cut, placing your ball so that the object ball may take a position at or near to Fig. 1. That obtained, the losing hazard so presented ought to insure the winning of the game.

PLATE I23

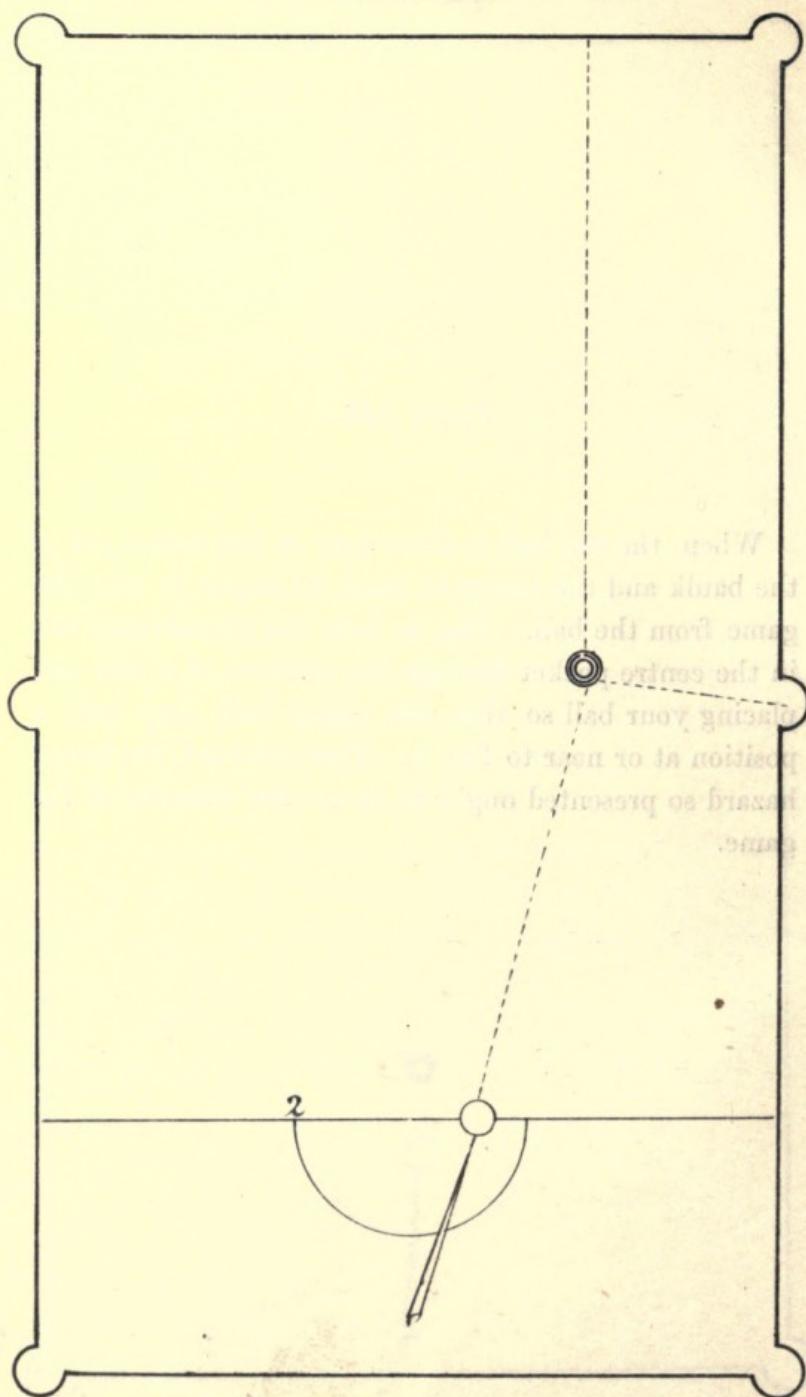


PLATE 123.

In playing for the hazard now presented the generality of players, when in hand, place the ball at the extremity of the circle marked with the Fig. 2; but in playing from that position, even the best of players, using force, cannot be certain of another score. By playing for the losing hazard from the situation represented, the ball played upon, on returning from the cushion in the baulk, will take a position in the *centre* of the Table, and if the strength applied does not carry it beyond the middle pocket the valuable hazard represented in Plate 52 will be presented, and the winning of the game may follow. Should a strength so desirable not be obtained, and the object ball carried even a yard beyond the centre pocket, a good losing hazard for the corner will be left; and that properly played may yield a result equally advantageous.

PLATE 124

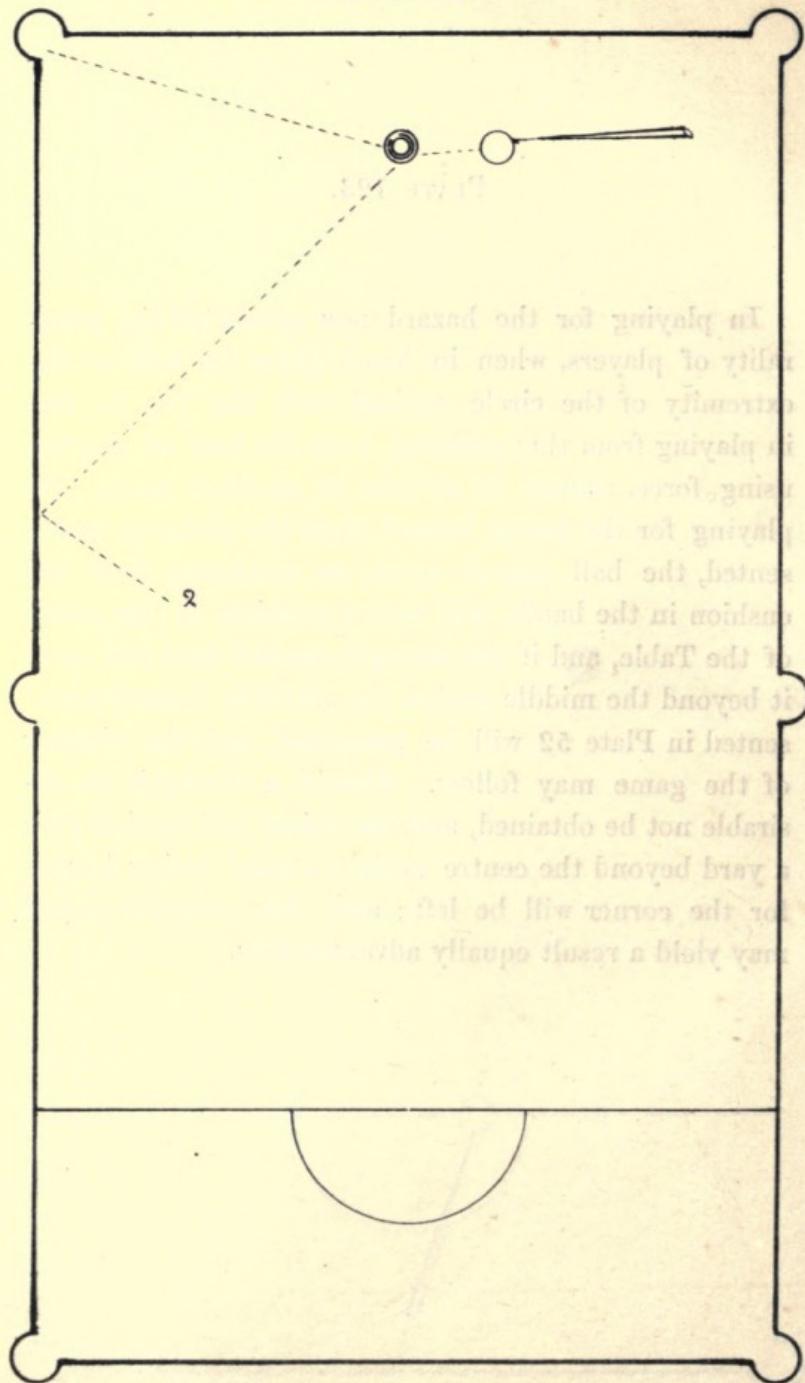


PLATE 124.

Upon a Table not too fast I think the game, 24 up, ought to be won from the red ball as it is now placed. Taking it for granted that the red ball can be holed in the corner pocket, the use of the counter side stroke, arresting the progress of the ball after it has struck the side cushion, will place the played-with ball at Fig. 2, and from that position a good losing hazard will be presented for the other corner pocket when the red ball has been respotted. In playing, however, for the losing hazard, some attention with respect to strength will be necessary, for the red ball should be so placed as to present a certain hazard for one of the centre pockets.

PLATE I25

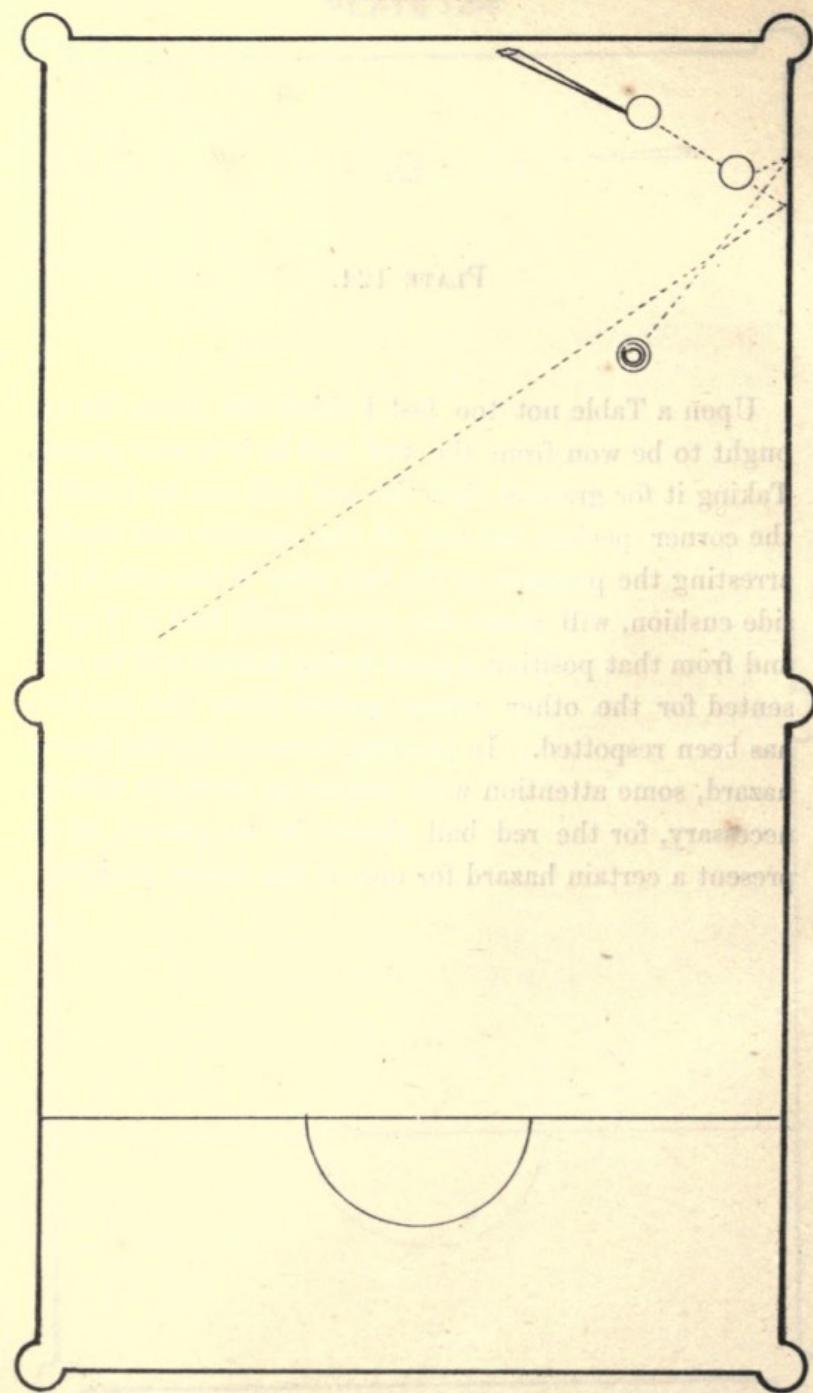


PLATE 125.

The balls as now situated appear to be nearly safe, and yet from a break so unpromising I have frequently, in practice, scored the 24 points. Canoning slowly on the red ball, the white is doubled near to the centre pocket, and a losing hazard has generally been presented from either the white or red ball ; making that hazard with a strength that left another score, the points required for completing the game of 24 up were generally obtained. I have endeavoured, in a previous page, to shew that longer games lead to a style of play at variance with discretion. To excel, requires that every stroke should be carefully played, and the strengths nicely judged. The attention that the game really demands can scarcely be extended over a long game, unless the mind and the stake are riveted together.

PLATE 126

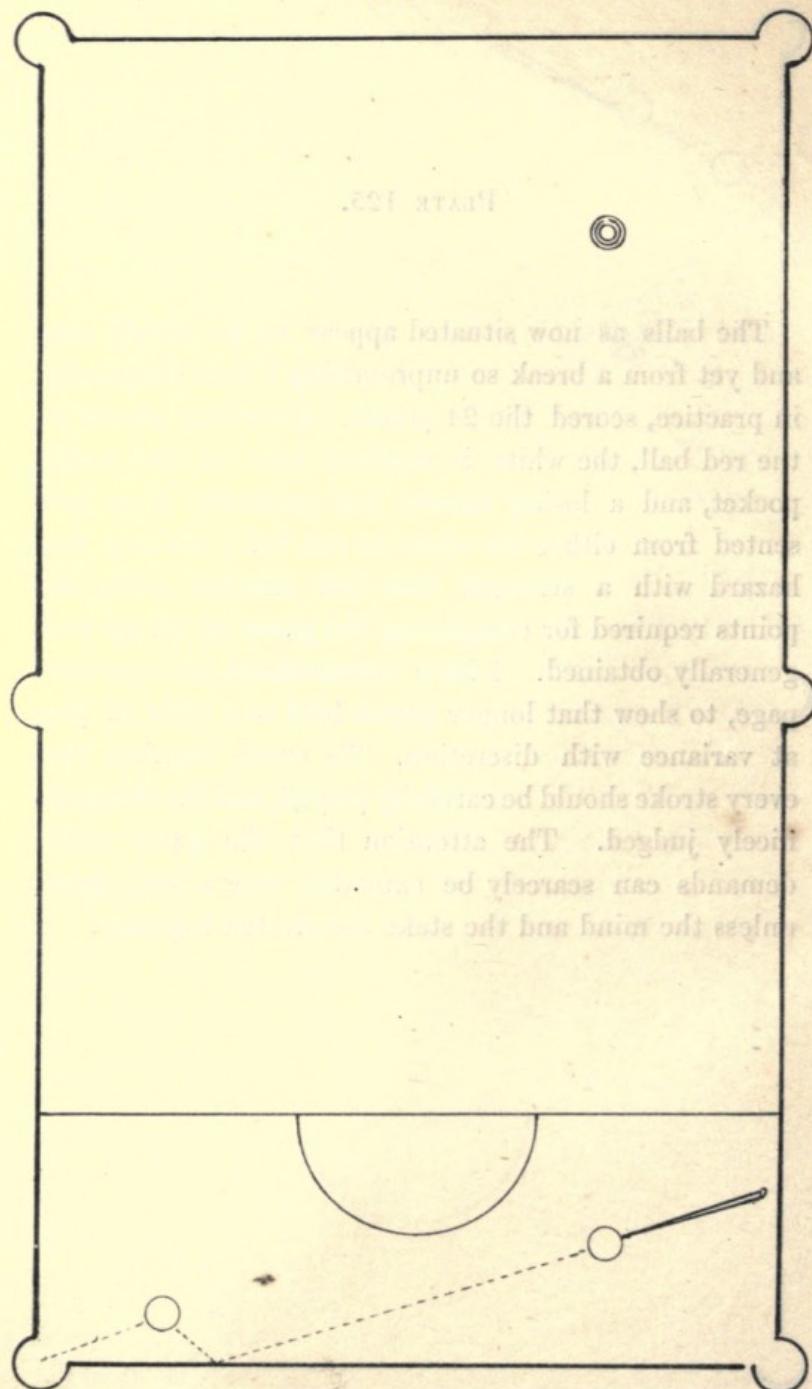


PLATE 126.

The advantage derived from converting a winning hazard into a losing one has been already described, and the present diagram is exhibited to shew that it can be accomplished from the cushion should no other method present itself. The hazard now presented is worthy of practice, as a good break will generally follow. It is a hazard always played for by Mr. Roberts, and always with the greatest success.

PLATE 127

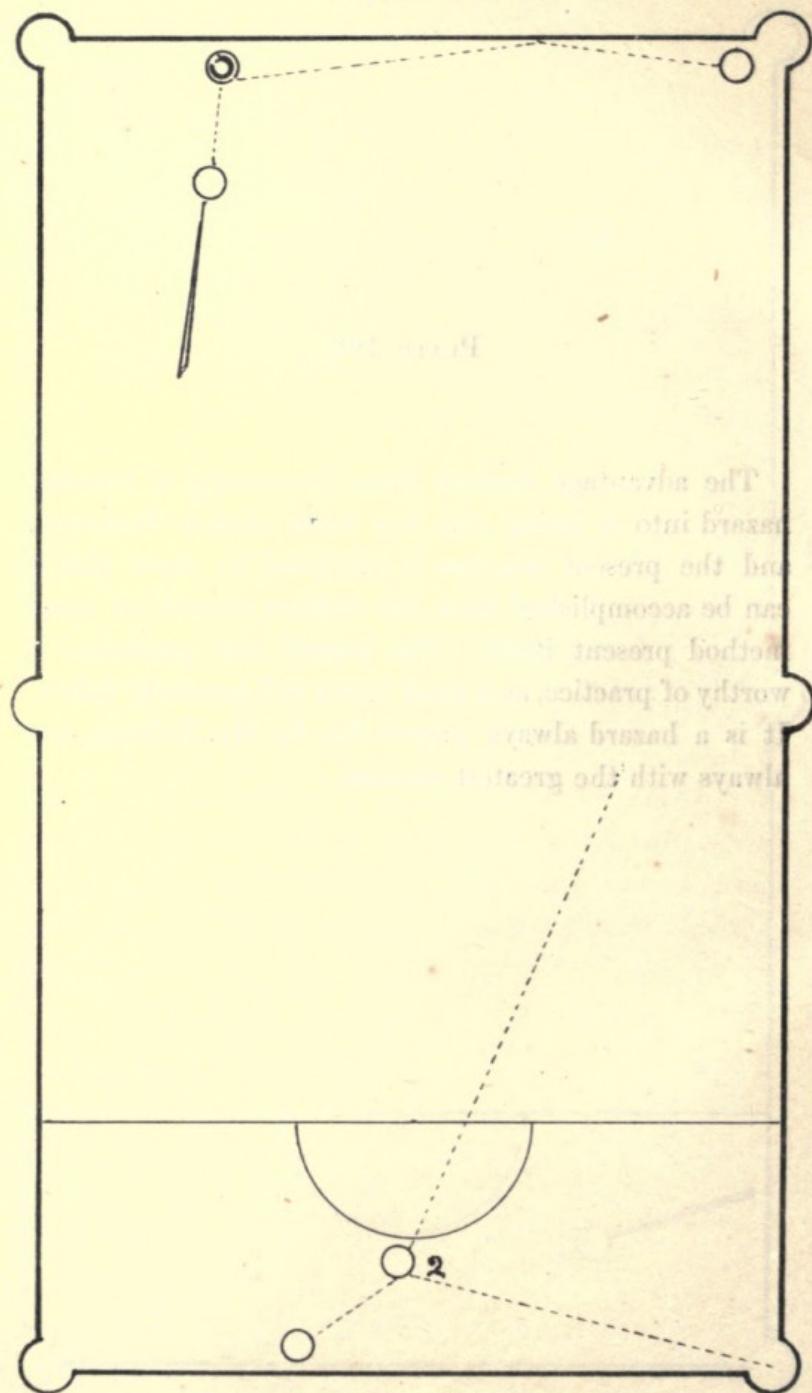
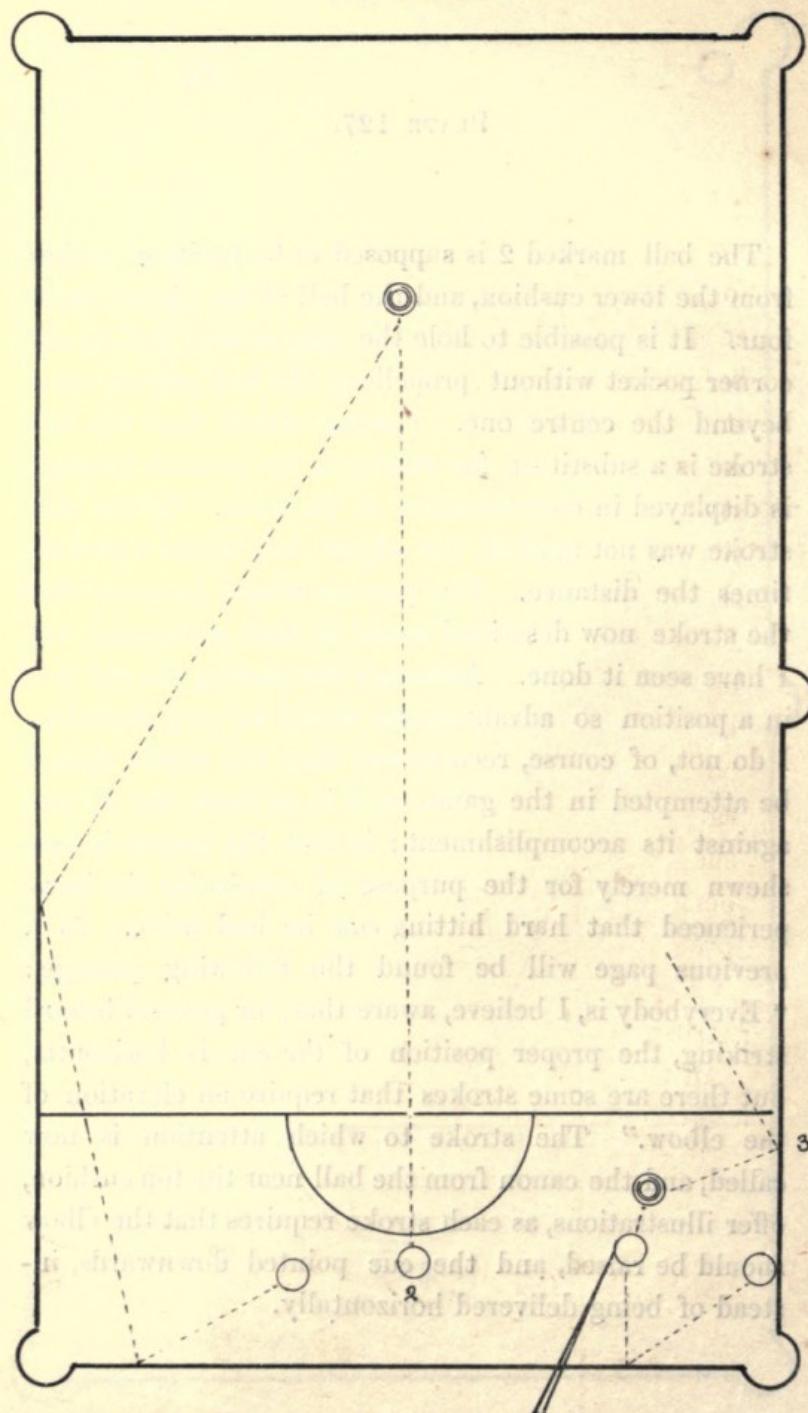


PLATE 127.

The ball marked 2 is supposed to be fourteen inches from the lower cushion, and the ball of the player about four. It is possible to hole the played-with ball in the corner pocket without propelling the ball played upon beyond the centre one. Having stated that the side stroke is a substitute for strength, the present diagram is displayed in corroboration of its truth. If the side stroke was not applied, the object ball would travel six times the distance. Few persons would imagine that the stroke now described could be thus performed, but I have seen it done. Although the placing the red ball in a position so advantageous would be very desirable, I do not, of course, recommend that the stroke should be attempted in the game, as it is, at least, ten to one against its accomplishment; in fact the hazard is now shewn merely for the purpose of *convincing* the inexperienced that hard hitting *can* be laid aside. In a previous page will be found the following passage: "Everybody is, I believe, aware that, for general hazard striking, the proper position of the cue is horizontal, but there are some strokes that require an elevation of the elbow." The stroke to which attention is now called, and the canon from the ball near the top cushion, offer illustrations, as each stroke requires that the elbow should be raised, and the cue pointed downwards, instead of being delivered horizontally.

PLATE 128



The point of the Cue ought to have been placed much below
the centre of the Ball.

The pupil is directed, with reference to the side-stroke, to strike his ball on the side he wishes it to go, but the plate now exhibited will shew an exception to that general rule. If the ball to which the left side stroke is now applied passed through the object ball, or quitted it in the direction of Fig. 3, it would continue its course to the left; but if the same side stroke was employed for the purpose of twisting the ball straight back, and, in its progress in that direction, it should touch a cushion, the action would be at once reversed, and then, instead of inclining to the left, it would depart from it and proceed to the right. As the peculiarity of this action may not, perhaps, be generally known, the present canon is described for the purpose of shewing its effect, and it is, I believe, the only instance in which a ball, receiving the left side stroke, can be made to take a direction to the right. The canon from the ball marked with the Fig. 2, can be commonly made by M. Berger, the French professor. Few persons will suppose it to be possible, but I am acquainted with those who have seen it done. The cue is held perpendicularly.

* See Plate 142.

PLATE 129

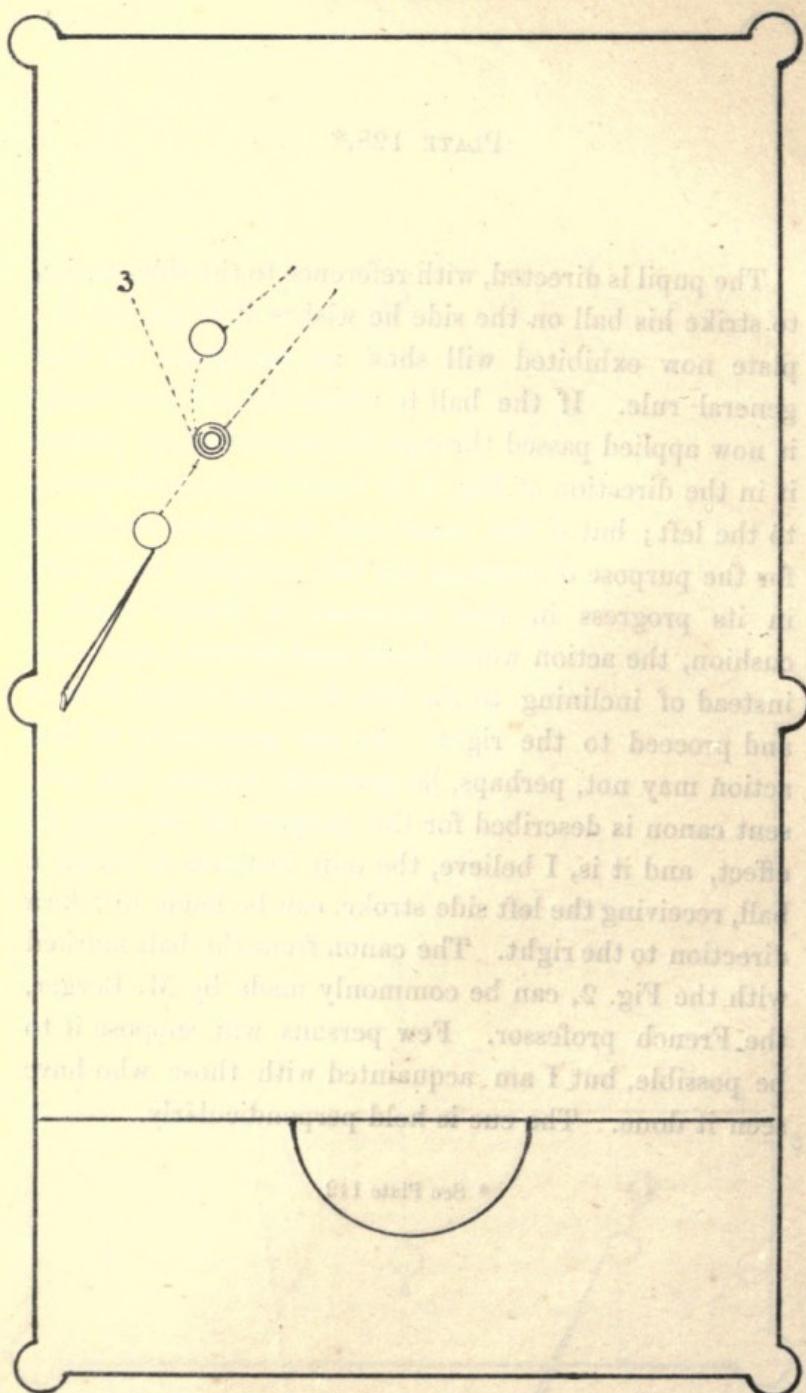


PLATE 129.

The balls were in positions now described, when a professional player of eminence offered to bet that eight points were not made from the break. I played, and scored 24. There are two methods of playing. The first by walking a canon, and placing the red ball near enough to the right hand corner pocket to insure another score. The second method of playing, and the one I adopted, is likewise to canon, but not moving the red ball further than is described in the diagram. In order to get a little on the *left* side of the white ball, that both balls may be *before* the ball played with, it will be necessary to strike your own ball on the right side, for without the assistance of the side stroke you cannot place the white ball in the position indicated in the plate. The advantage derived from canoning on the side of the second ball so that you place both balls in advance of the one played with, has been already described, and its importance should never be forgotten. If the canon to which attention is now called were attempted by hitting the played-with ball in the centre, it would, by pursuing a natural course, pass in a direct line to Fig. 3, but the application of the side stroke, obliging it to take the curved line, not only produces the canon, but leaves the balls in the situations required.

PLATE 130

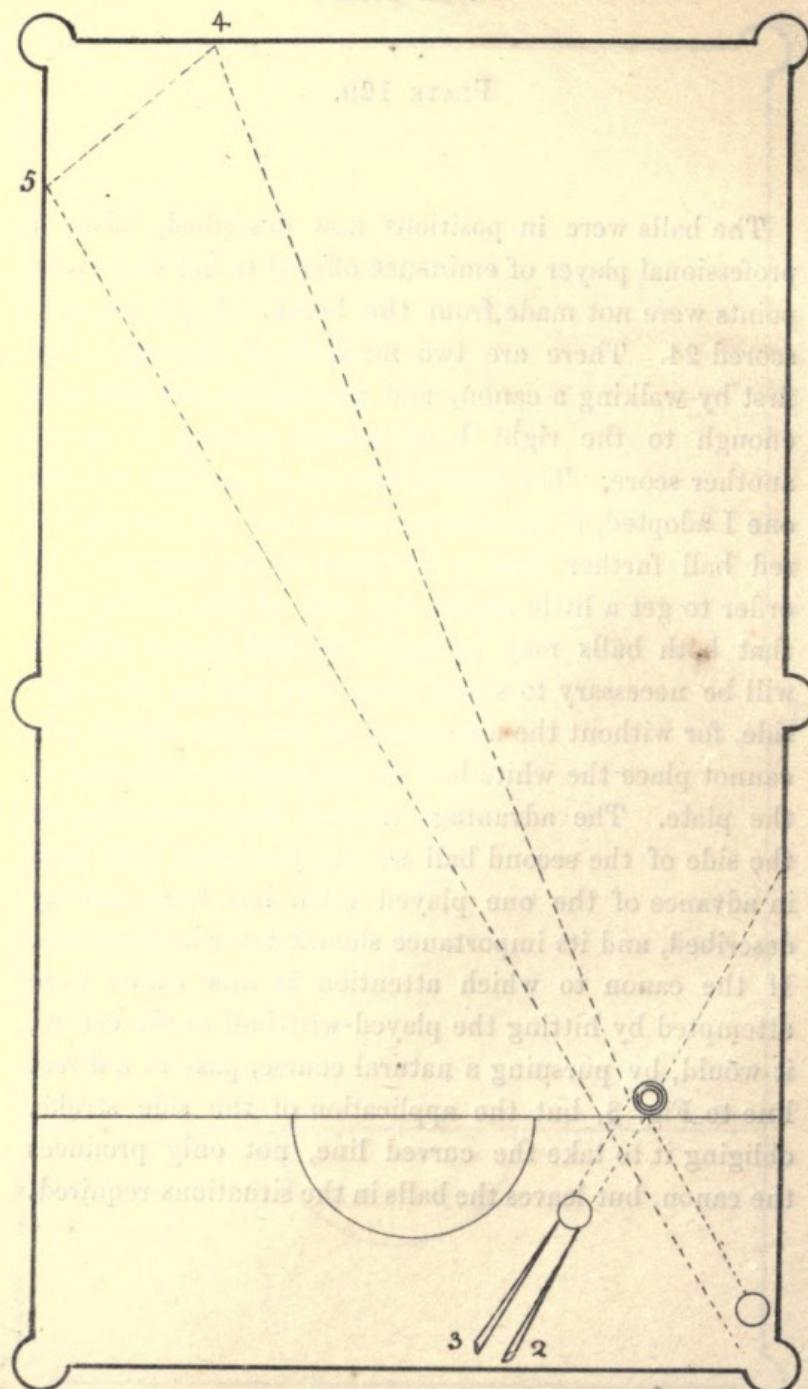


PLATE 130.

From the balls as now placed there are two ways of playing for a canon, and each holds out the prospect of a good break. The one by the twist, from the cue marked 2, takes the red ball round to the white, and the three balls may remain nearly together. The other method, from the cue marked 3, would be to strike the played-with ball on the left side, and the red ball where it is indicated in the plate, and a strength applied that will leave a hazard from it for one of the centre pockets. The played-with ball, cushioning at Figs. 4 and 5, will probably enter the corner pocket should the canon be missed, and the red ball, presenting, perhaps, a losing hazard, will lead to another good break. From either of these methods of playing a run of many points might be expected.

PLATE 131

3

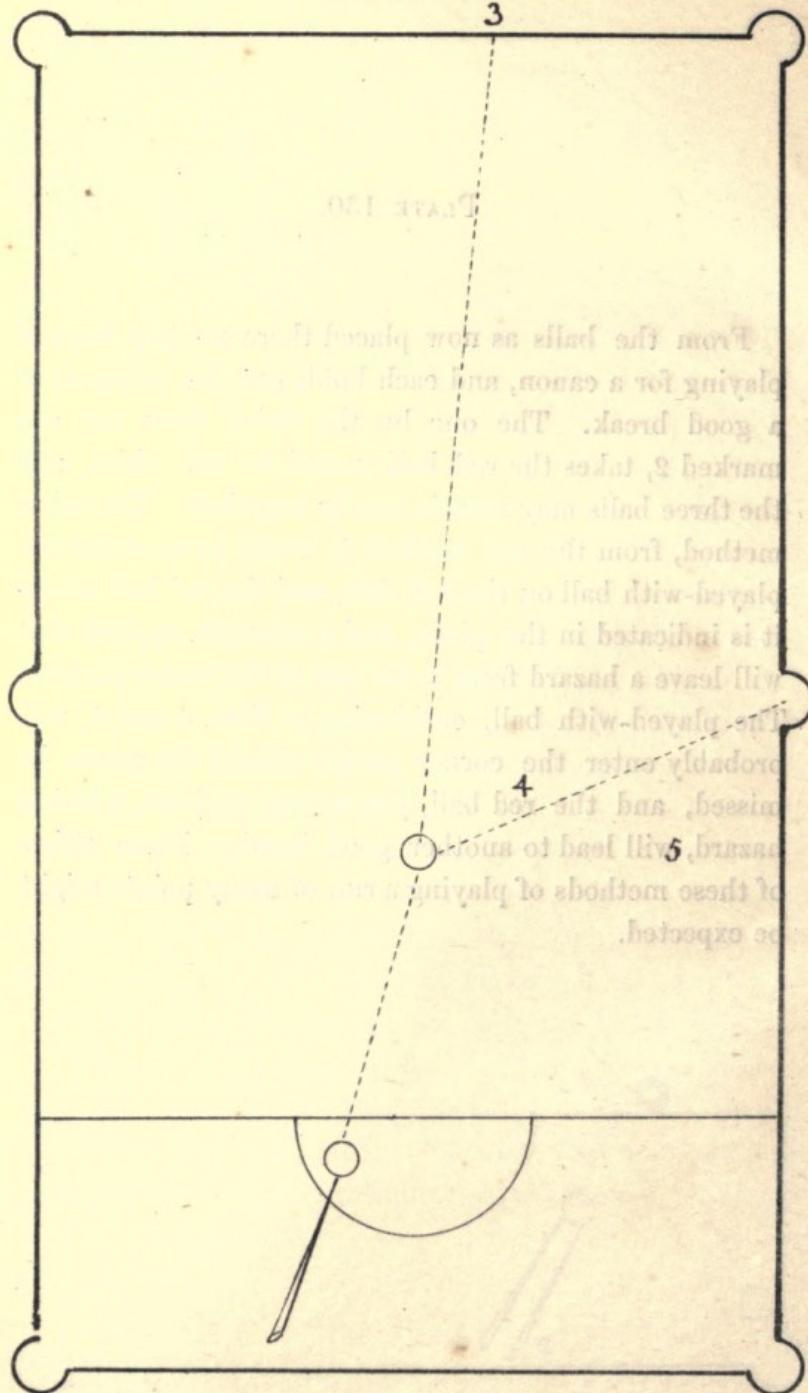


PLATE 131.

The winning or losing a game will frequently depend upon the correctness of the ball, or the truth of the bed of the Table; and when either is defective cease to play, as the best played stroke will avail nothing unless the ball returns from the cushion in accordance with the angle of incidence. The object ball now striking the top cushion at Fig. 3, ought, by the angle of reflection, to take a position at or near to Fig. 4, and leave, consequently, another losing hazard for the same pocket. On the Table in a Room in Brighton, strange to say, greatly frequented, the red ball in returning from the top cushion invariably swerved from its direct course and settled itself at Fig. 5, leaving, instead of an easy losing hazard from which a good score might have been expected, a winning one of, to me, great difficulty, the making of which, at so small a pocket, was against even the finest player. To myself, a wretched winning hazard striker, the swerving of the ball was most fatal, and made, I have no hesitation in saying, in a match of long duration, the difference of twenty or thirty games! Allow me to repeat that if the ball returns from a cushion with a false angle the science connected with the game is destroyed, and the superior excellence emanating from the mind rendered worthless.

PLATE 132

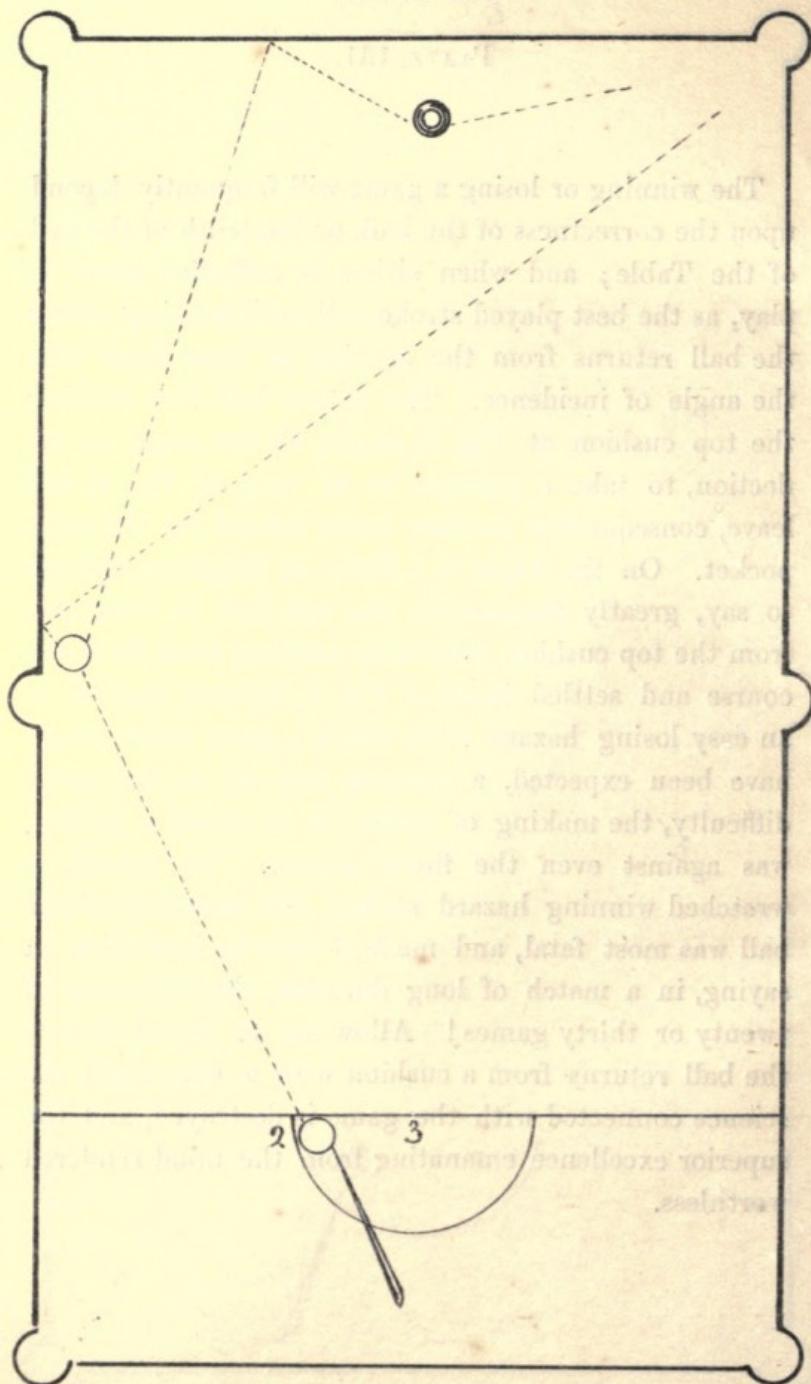


PLATE 132.

The break now displayed is one of great promise, and, to a superior player, seldom fails in giving a good score. In making the canon great nicety of strength will be required, as the white ball must be only doubled *towards* the right hand corner pocket; should it enter, the goodness of the break will be destroyed. The white ball carried in the direction indicated by the line, and the red ball placed, through the medium of the canon, nearly to it, there is no saying when the score may end. With Mr. Kentfield the canon now described is a pet stroke, and, in his hands, would probably finish any game that did not exceed fifty points. Upon the merit of the stroke in question we have frequently conversed, and, on the last occasion, removing the ball from Fig. 2 and placing it on that part of the circle marked with the Fig. 3, he thus addressed me. "If I could invent or procure a point for the cue that would enable me to reach this canon from the part of the circle where I have now placed the ball, without applying *greater force* than would be required to effect it from the position marked 2, the *power* of my game would be infinitely increased, as I could *then* accomplish all that I desire with *gentle strength*." An admission of such a nature fully confirms all that I have advanced with reference to the importance of that style of game; and shews, most clearly, the benefit to be derived from its adoption. At the shrine of "Gentle Strengths," Mr. Kentfield worships, and, like myself, is fully aware of its being the mainspring to practical progress and improvement.

PLATE 133

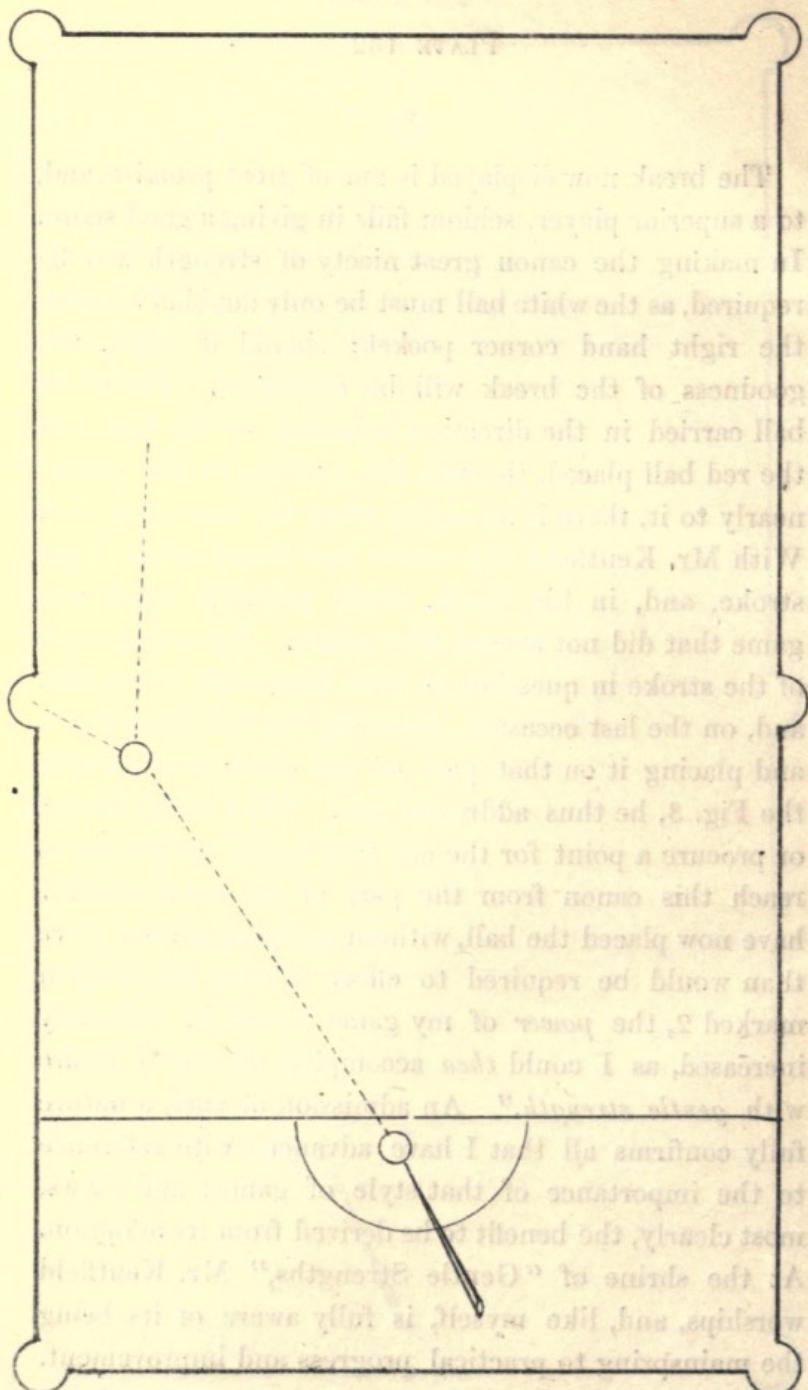


PLATE 133.

The winning hazard now presented I have seen played in various ways. The majority of players hole the red ball, and go to the lower cushion either to procure a losing hazard when the ball has been spotted, or to obtain what is termed the "spot stroke." Having bestowed upon the different methods a fair trial, I am satisfied that the best way of playing is to hole the ball in the centre pocket with a strength that will carry the played-with ball to the position marked in the diagram, obtaining a losing hazard for the opposite corner pocket. The hazard now shewn was frequently presented when Mr. Roberts played in Brighton, and upon all occasions he played the stroke as it is now described ; and as a succession of hazards invariably followed, combining, frequently, even to the winning of the game of 100 up, the correctness of the method needs no further proof. Upon Tables with large pockets, and where the spot for the red ball is improperly placed, thirteen inches from the cushion, the first-mentioned style of playing might be adopted with some prospect of success ; but upon the superior and correctly formed Tables, now manufactured by Burroughes and Watts, such a system would not at all times yield even a second score.

PLATE 134

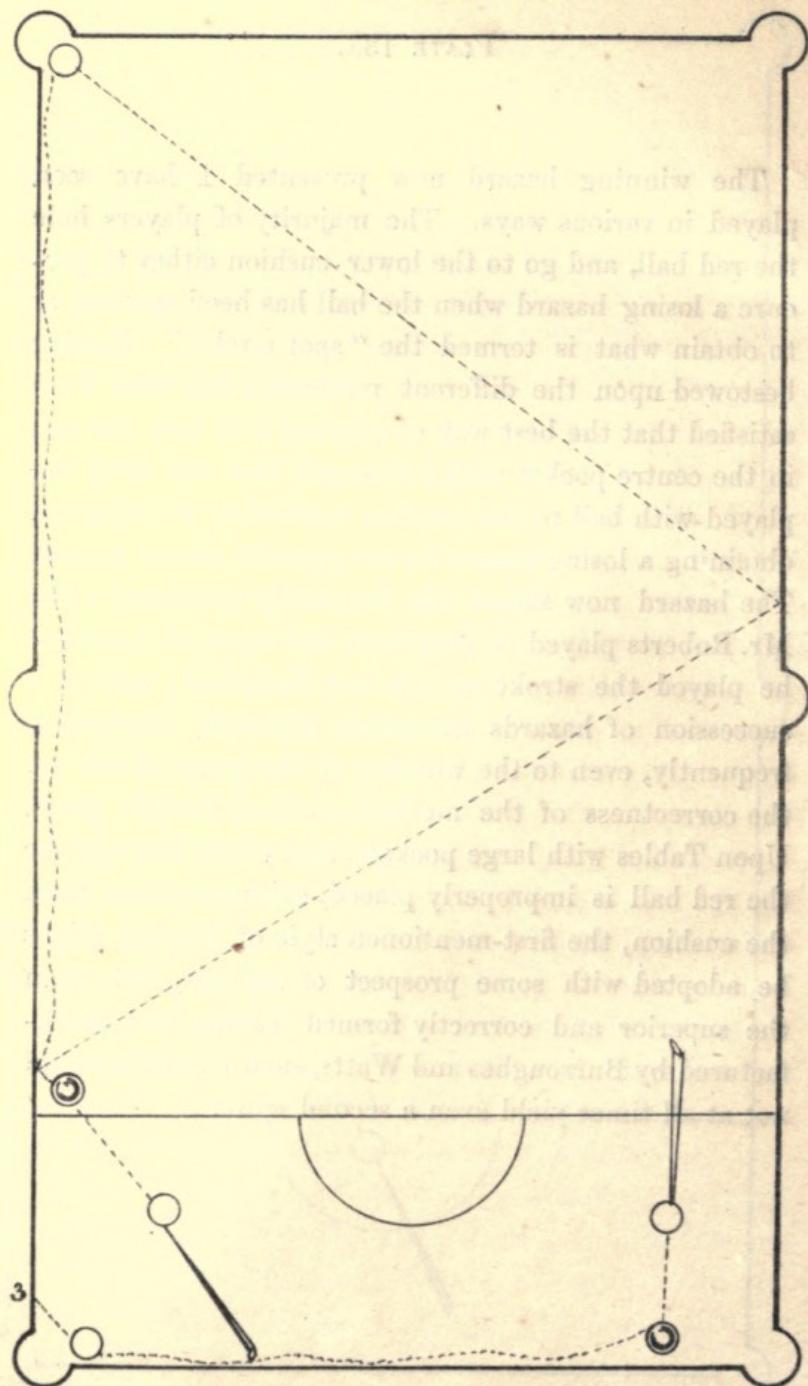


PLATE 134.

This diagram is displayed that the counter side-stroke may be practised. From the red ball near the cushion on the left hand side of the Table, I made a ten stroke ; canoning, and putting all the balls into the left hand corner pocket. The canon from the red ball near the cushion in the baulk, is very simple, since, if you avoid the kiss and put on *sufficient* side stroke, it must canon. If the played-with ball misses the canon from the lower cushion, and should touch the side cushion even at Fig. 3, it will return upon the ball.

PLATE 135

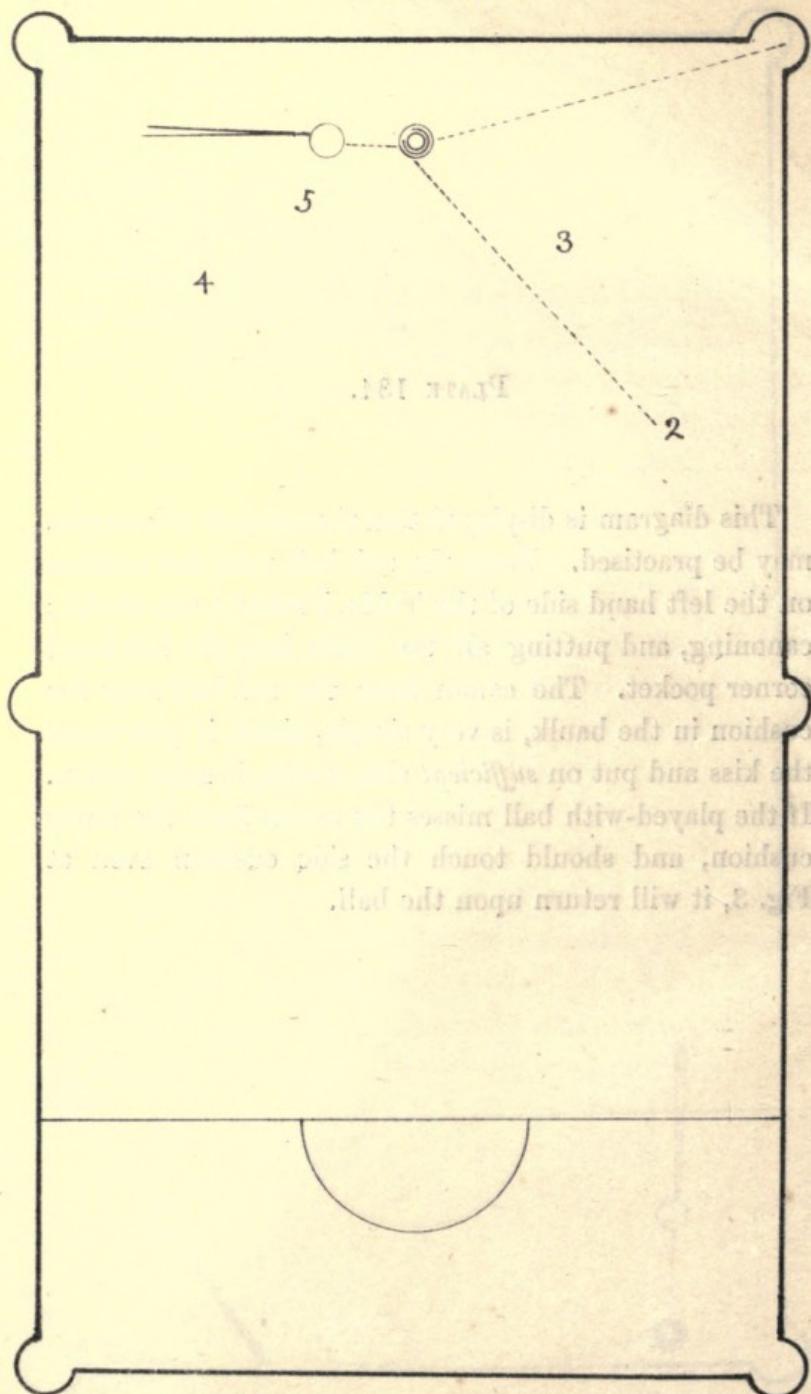


PLATE 135.

The spot stroke is to many players most valuable ; but in playing it the occasional use of the side stroke is absolutely necessary. If the hazard now presented was played naturally,—that is, by striking the played-with ball in the centre,—the ball played with would take the position marked by Fig. 2, and the next hazard would become most difficult ; but if the player strikes the ball on the left side, it will, on quitting the red ball, incline to the left and proceed in the direction of Fig. 3, leaving a hazard, not only easy, but one that would enable the striker to obtain a most favourable position. Any one whose winning hazard striking is good enough to hole the red ball from Fig. 4, ought to turn the spot stroke to the greatest advantage, as from that position I could place the played-with ball — from the lower cushion—at Fig. 5, within about seven or eight inches of the red ball when re-spotted, obtaining, consequently, a position most favourable for the continuation of the stroke.

PLATE 136

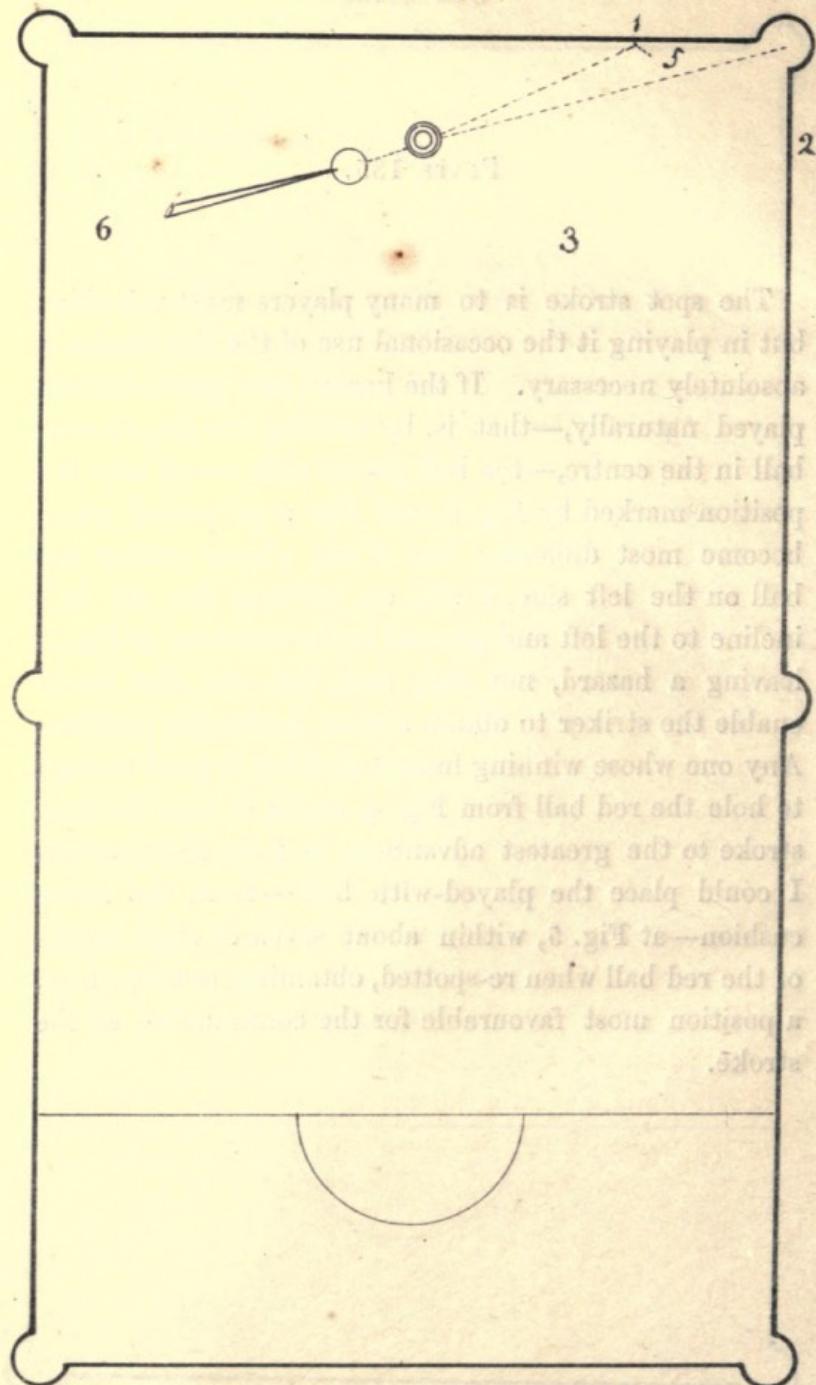


PLATE 136.

SPOT STROKE CONTINUED.

If the white ball is perfectly straight with the red it can be twisted back, and another hazard will be left; but when the played-with ball inclines a little to the right of the red ball the twist should not be attempted, for a proper position could not be obtained without the use of the counter side-stroke, and the making of the hazard is then rendered very uncertain. Under such circumstances, the white ball should be made to follow, cushioning at Fig. 1, and Fig. 2, obtaining from Fig. 3 a good position for the next stroke. That would be the method when desirous of continuing the winning hazards, but my winning hazard striking being defective, I now invariably play the ball as it is indicated by the line leading to Fig. 5, and obtaining from that position a losing hazard that enables me to place the red ball over the centre pocket. If the player's ball be at Fig. 6, (five inches from the cushion and quite straight with the red) he must hole the red, and obtain a favourable position for the next stroke by means of the twist, and the played-with ball ought not to rebound more than five or six inches. It may appear difficult to play with strength upon the object ball and not return from it more than a few inches, but the player must acquire the art of subduing the speed, or rather, controlling the power, of the played-with ball. In fact he *must* make it subservient to his wishes.

PLATE 137

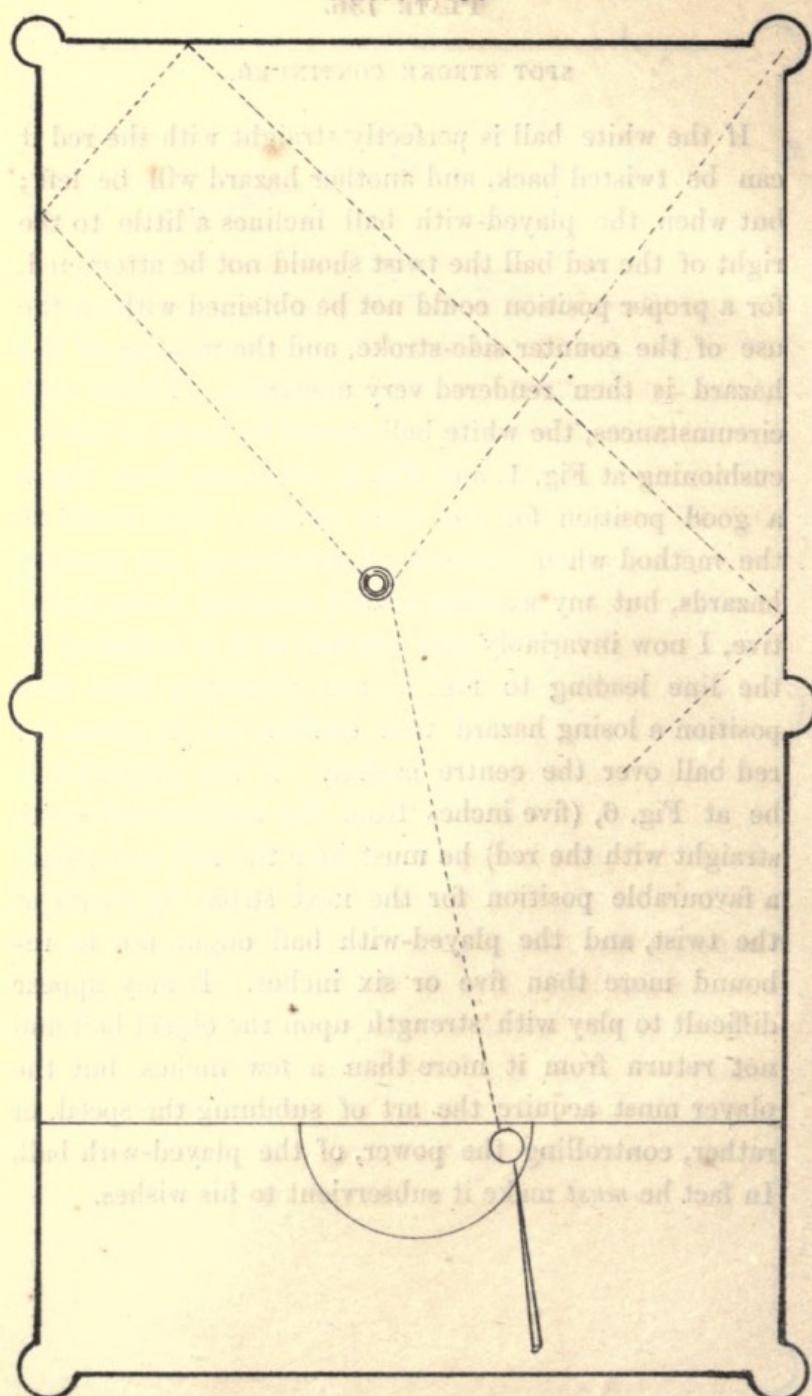


PLATE 137.

To myself, who can always punish an opponent if I can get the red ball to present a losing hazard for the centre pocket, the hazard now represented is of the greatest importance. It should be played as described in the diagram, and the red ball must be brought to the middle pocket. It is useless to make a hazard unless the object ball be taken to the spot desired. The wisest thing I ever heard Mr. Kentfield say with reference to the game of Billiards, was this, "It is better to miss the hazard than not to do it perfectly." With hazard strikers as wonderful as Mr. Roberts, the placing of a ball to an inch or two may not be of consequence, but to players whose execution is, like my own, very limited, it is of the first importance, and makes the difference between the winning and the losing of the game. If the player has to execute a stroke to which a difficulty is attached, he will frequently miss it, if suffering under a nervous feeling from an increased amount of stake; but if, by a proper strength, an easy hazard can be left, the funkings anxiety will be avoided. A diagram similar to this is represented in another page, but the importance of the stroke is so great, that I am anxious to bestow upon it the emphasis of reiteration.

PLATE 139

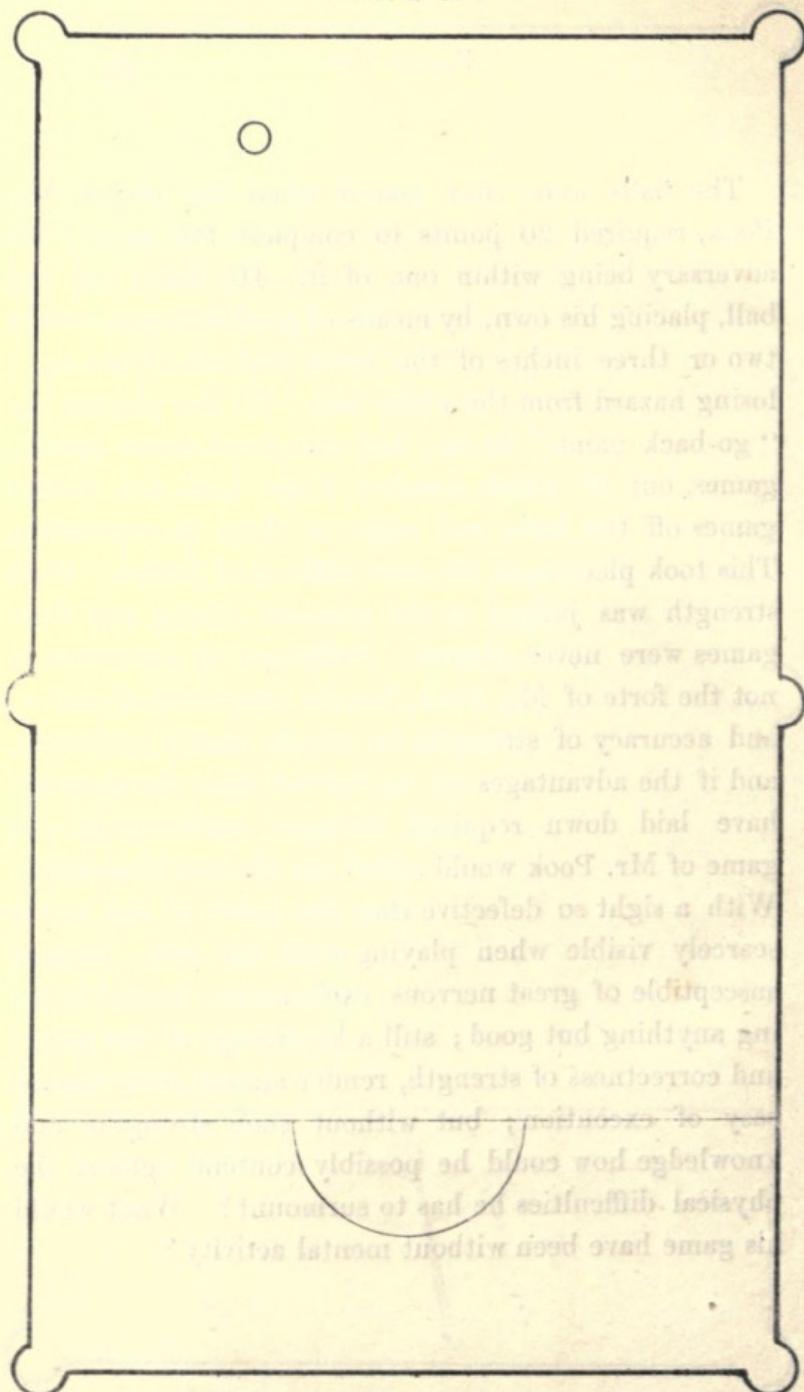


PLATE 139.

To the influence of the mind upon the nervous system allusion has been previously made, and the remarks connected with the diagram annexed, illustrate but too clearly, that even players of a superior grade may suffer from its effects. The simple losing hazard now described was four times presented to Mr. Kentfield in the early part of a match played in the month of April, 1857. The game 500 up, the noble lord, Mr. Kentfield's opponent, receiving 125 points. The ball of Mr. Kentfield being in hand, he was enabled, by placing it where he pleased, to obtain the easiest of hazards; well, the hazard, rendered thus easy, presented itself four times within the limits of fifteen minutes. On the first, second, and third attempt he failed in making the score, and on the fourth he missed the ball altogether. I remained after this, a careful observer of the game for upwards of two hours, and during that period, notwithstanding the finest breaks were presented, he never made fifteen points off the balls. Witnessing as I then did, a want of hazard striking so deplorable in a player of such celebrity, I am quite justified in again asserting that a want of nerve can render even a first-rate player almost harmless. That match, won by the noble lord, was followed by two others, the points being reduced from 125 to only 80, and strange to say, they were also won by Mr. Kentfield's noble opponent. To argue after such performances, upon the result of a match between Mr. Kentfield and Mr. Roberts would be an idle waste of words, since to play such as I have now described, Mr. Roberts could have given half the game. It must not nevertheless be imagined from the facts now stated, that the general game of Mr. Kentfield was then exhibited, for I dare say, on a succeeding day, if opposed to an amateur of slight pretensions, he would have resumed his usual style of play. I, as well as others in the room, considered him to be suffering from nervous excitement, and to that cause we charitably attributed his defeat.

PLATE 140

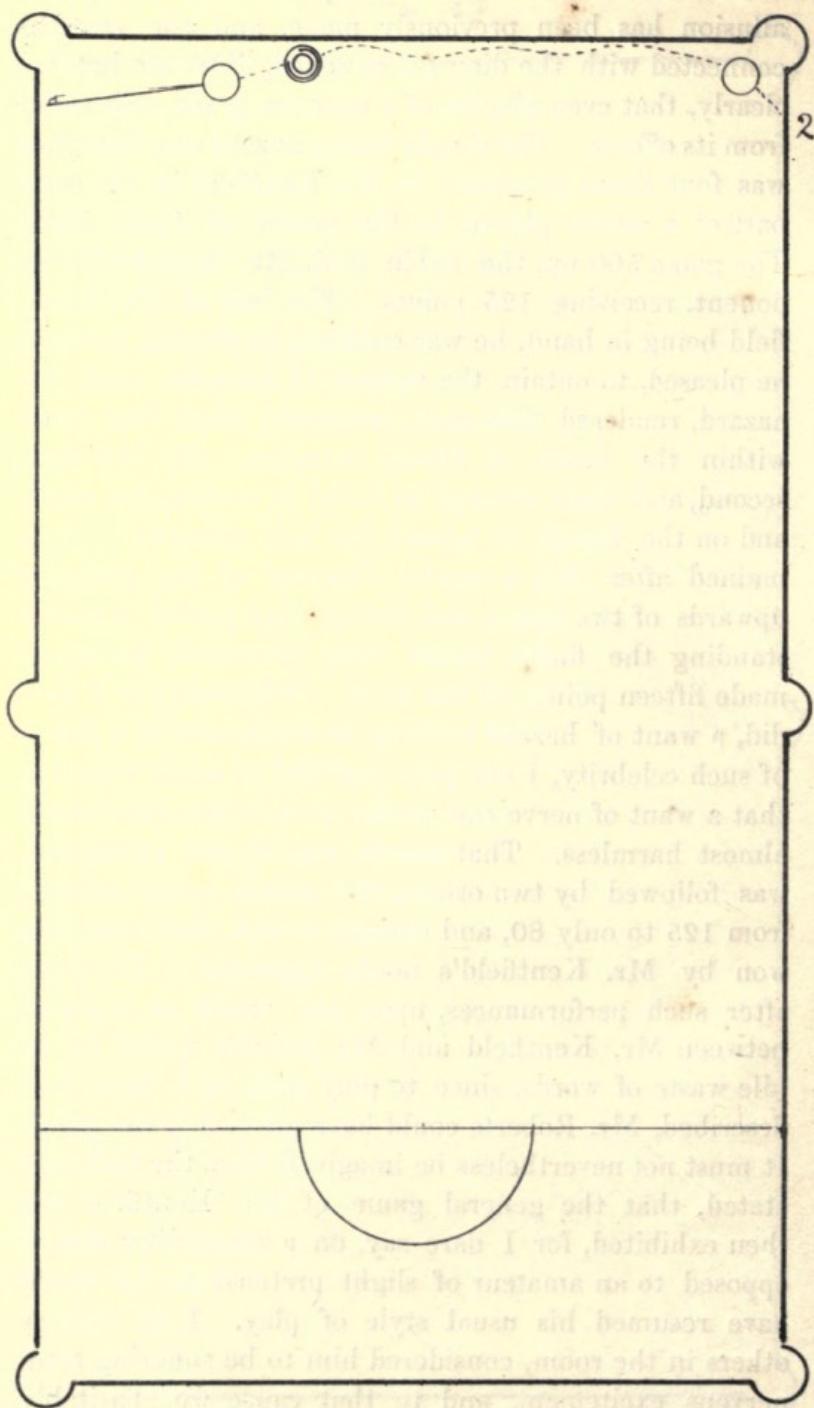
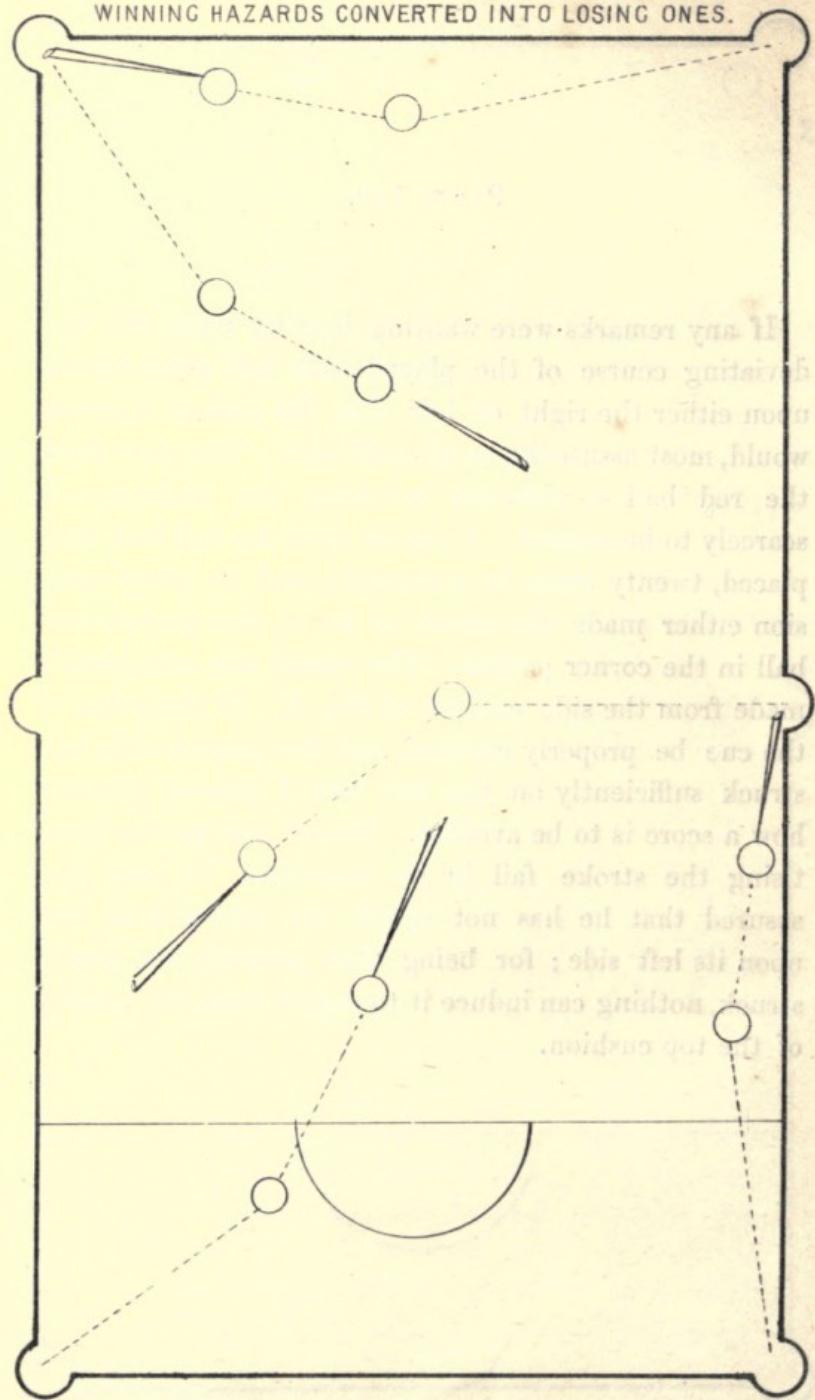


PLATE 140.

If any remarks were wanting bearing upon the un-deviating course of the played-with ball when struck upon either the right or left side, the present diagram would, most assuredly, be all-sufficient. The score from the red ball,— although touching the cushion— is scarcely to be missed. I played upon the red ball, thus placed, twenty times in succession, and on every occasion either made the canon or holed the played-with ball in the corner pocket. The canon was occasionally made from the side cushion at Fig. 2. If the point of the cue be properly chalked, and the played-with ball struck sufficiently on the left side, I cannot perceive how a score is to be avoided. Should the person practising the stroke fail in its execution, he may rest assured that he has not struck the played-with ball upon its left side; for being thus properly and gently struck, nothing can induce it to depart from the vicinity of the top cushion.

PLATE 141

WINNING HAZARDS CONVERTED INTO LOSING ONES.



Vide article headed "Superintendent of the Billiard Room at the Cocoa Tree Club."

PLATE 142

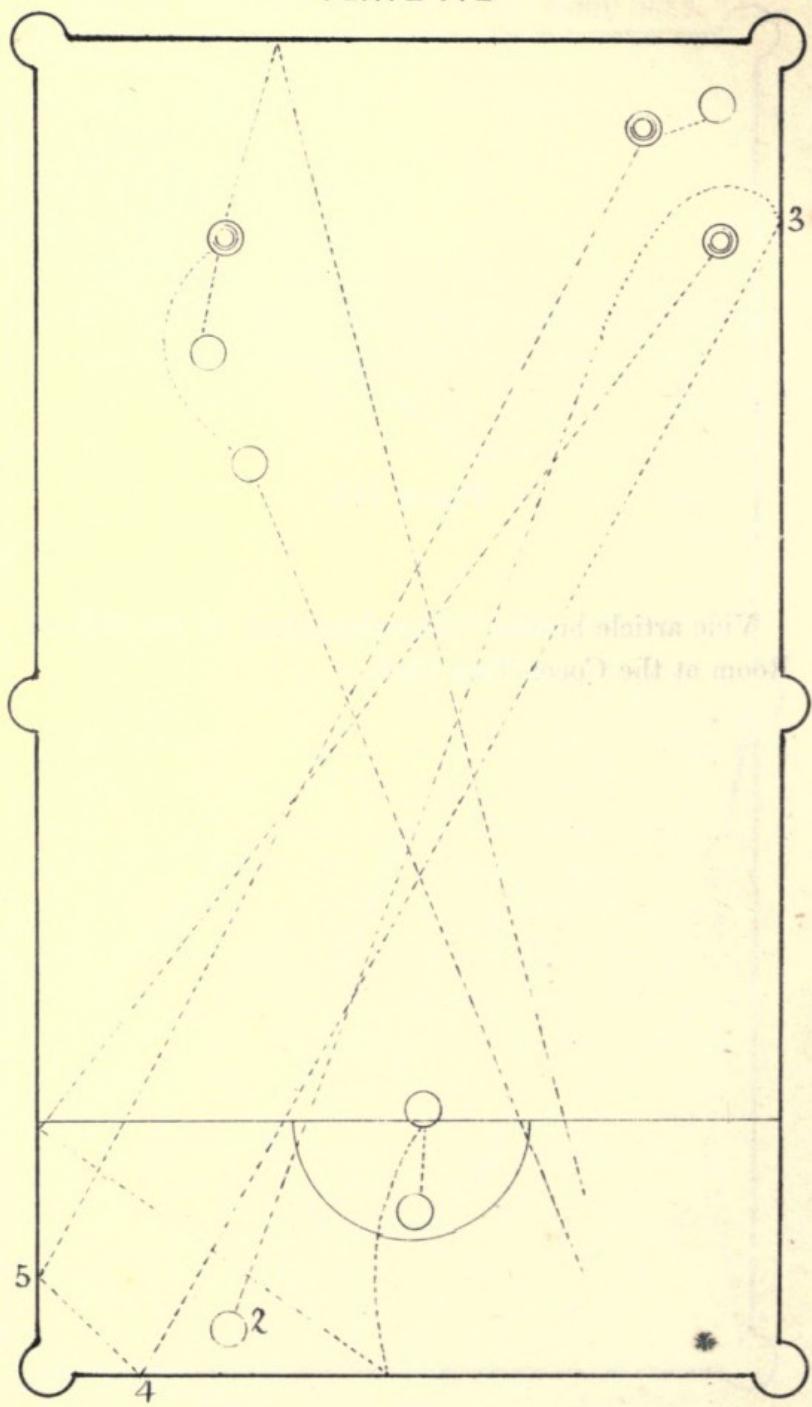


PLATE 142.

In making the canons now exhibited the cue is held perpendicularly, and the ball struck on its right side. These canons are surprising: the one from the ball marked with the Fig. 2 is so wonderful, so astounding, that I should refrain from representing it in the plate, could I not produce gentlemen who saw the stroke performed by M. Berger even on the first attempt. The played-with ball proceeds in a curved line towards the balls upon which it is to canon until it approaches within a short distance of them; then, without meeting any resisting power greater than the atmosphere, takes a direction to the right, and cushioning at Figs. 3, 4, and 5, eventually makes the canon after the manner described.—Vide article headed “M. Berger.”

A ball travelling nearly the length of a Billiard Table, and returning even beyond the spot from whence it was struck without meeting an opposing cushion, must, doubtlessly, astonish most beholders; but if the ball marked with the Fig. 2 was propelled in a direction perfectly straight, the action now described could be given to the ball by M. Berger. Mr. Pratt—of Billiard fame—can, with his fingers, propel a Billiard ball almost the length of the table and oblige it to return to him without striking a cushion. A hoop thrown from the hand can be similarly propelled, and similarly made to return. Such a feat has been witnessed, most probably, by man, woman, and child. A Billiard ball, although struck with the point of the cue, can be made subservient to the same control. The holding of the cue perpendicularly and striking downwards imparts to the ball an anxious desire to return to the spot from whence it departed, as soon as exhaustion of the propelling power has left it at liberty to do so. A gentleman, theoretically and practically great, is desirous that the peculiarity of an action so extraordinary should be elaborately and scientifically explained; but I trust the few remarks now made relative to the recoiling tendency imparted to the ball from the perpendicular delivery of the cue will be deemed sufficient.

The diagrams that follow, representing numerous useful canons, do not require an explanation, the point of the cue being directed to the part of the ball to be struck; and the course of the ball from cushion to cushion being marked in, will be found to be sufficient. However complicated the execution may appear, the young player may rest assured that most of the canons hereafter described are not half so difficult to accomplish as the making of a long winning hazard upon a fast Table with small pockets.

PLATE 143
CANONS BY THE SIDE STROKE.

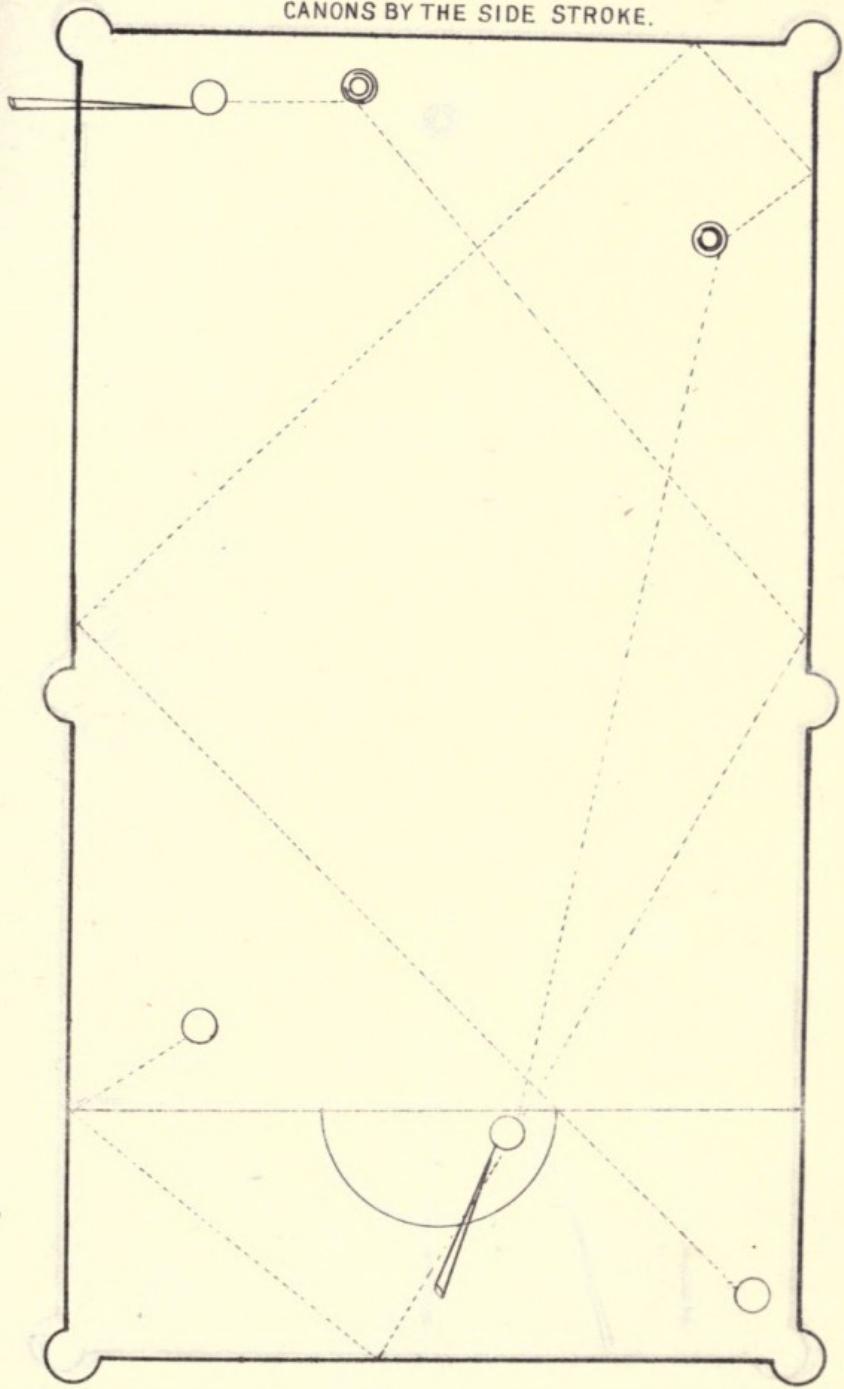


PLATE 144

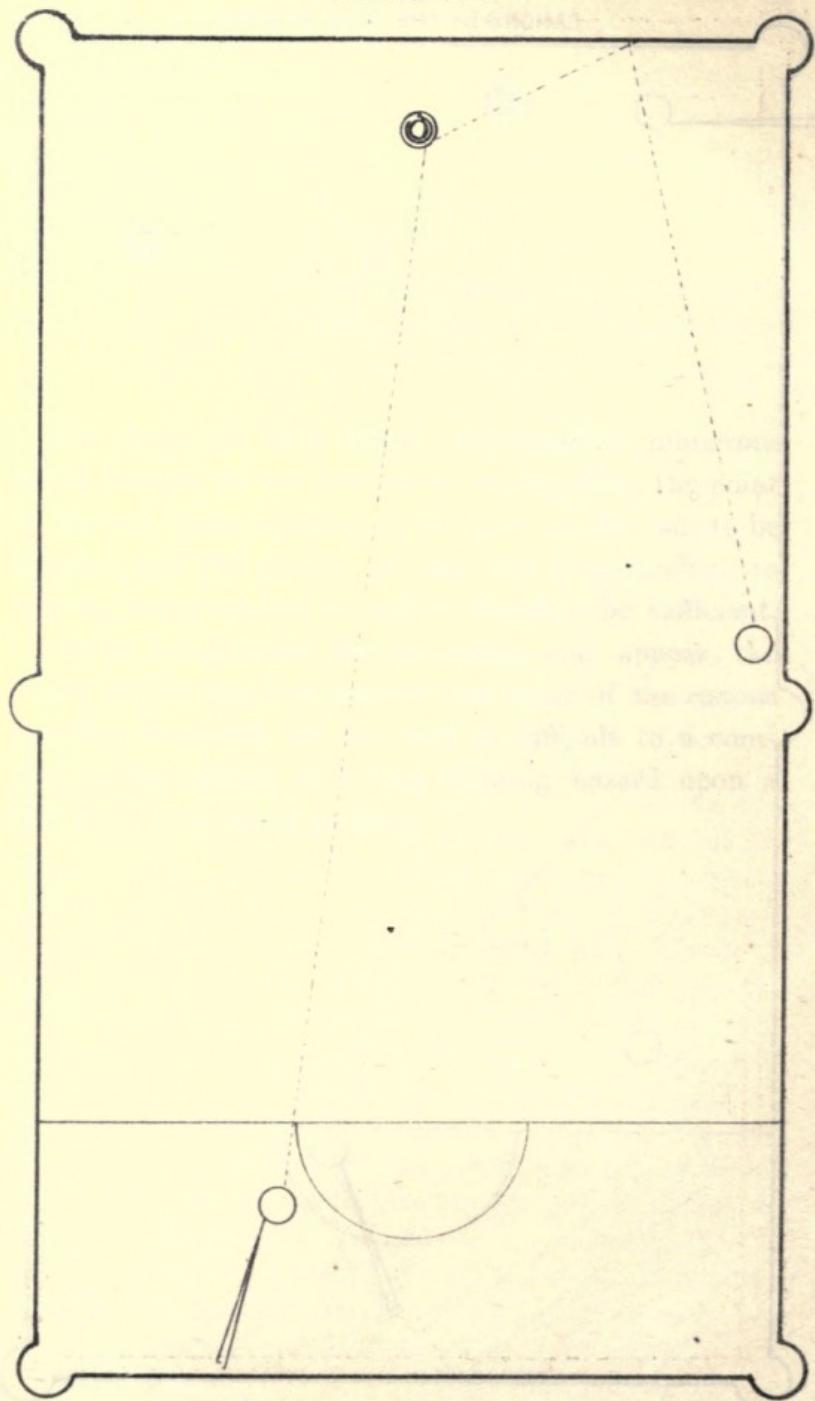


PLATE 145

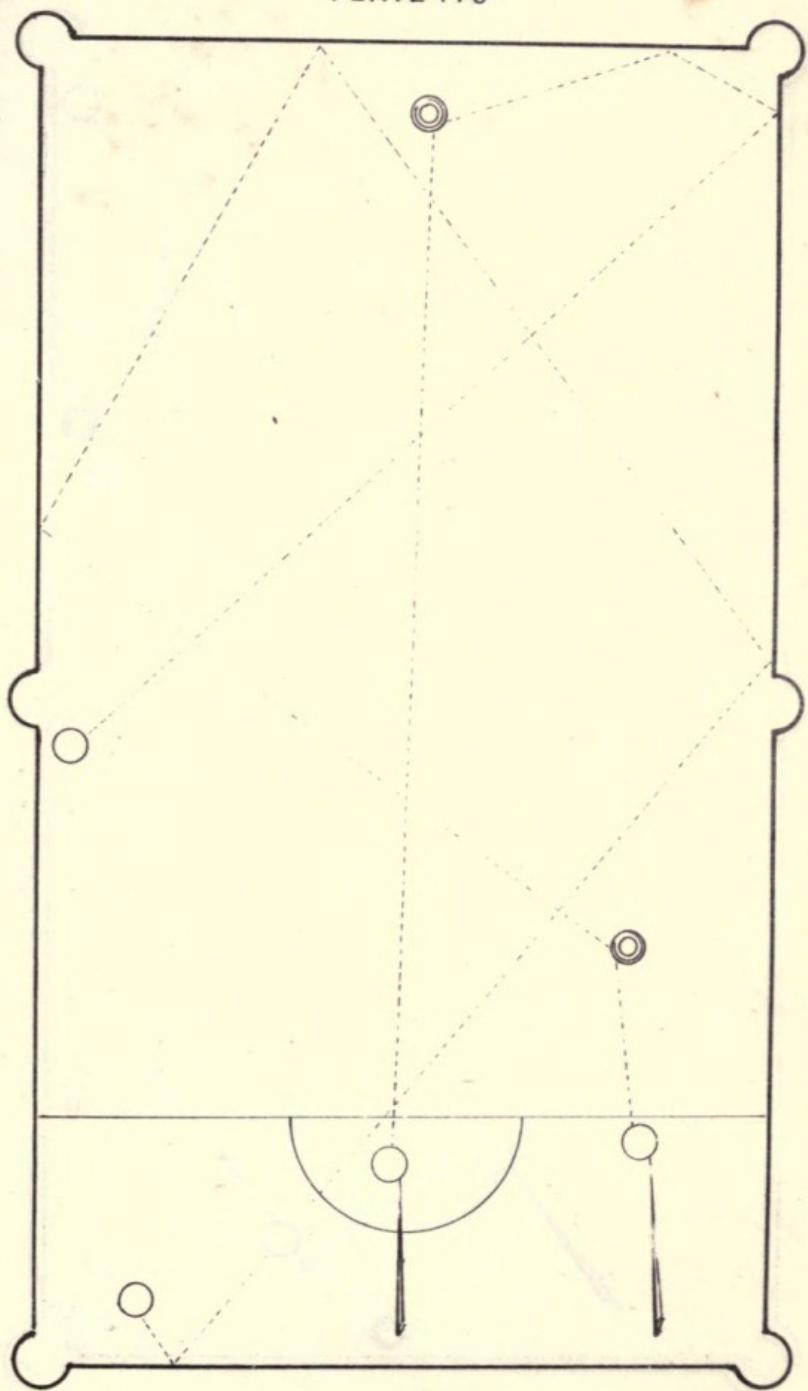


PLATE 146

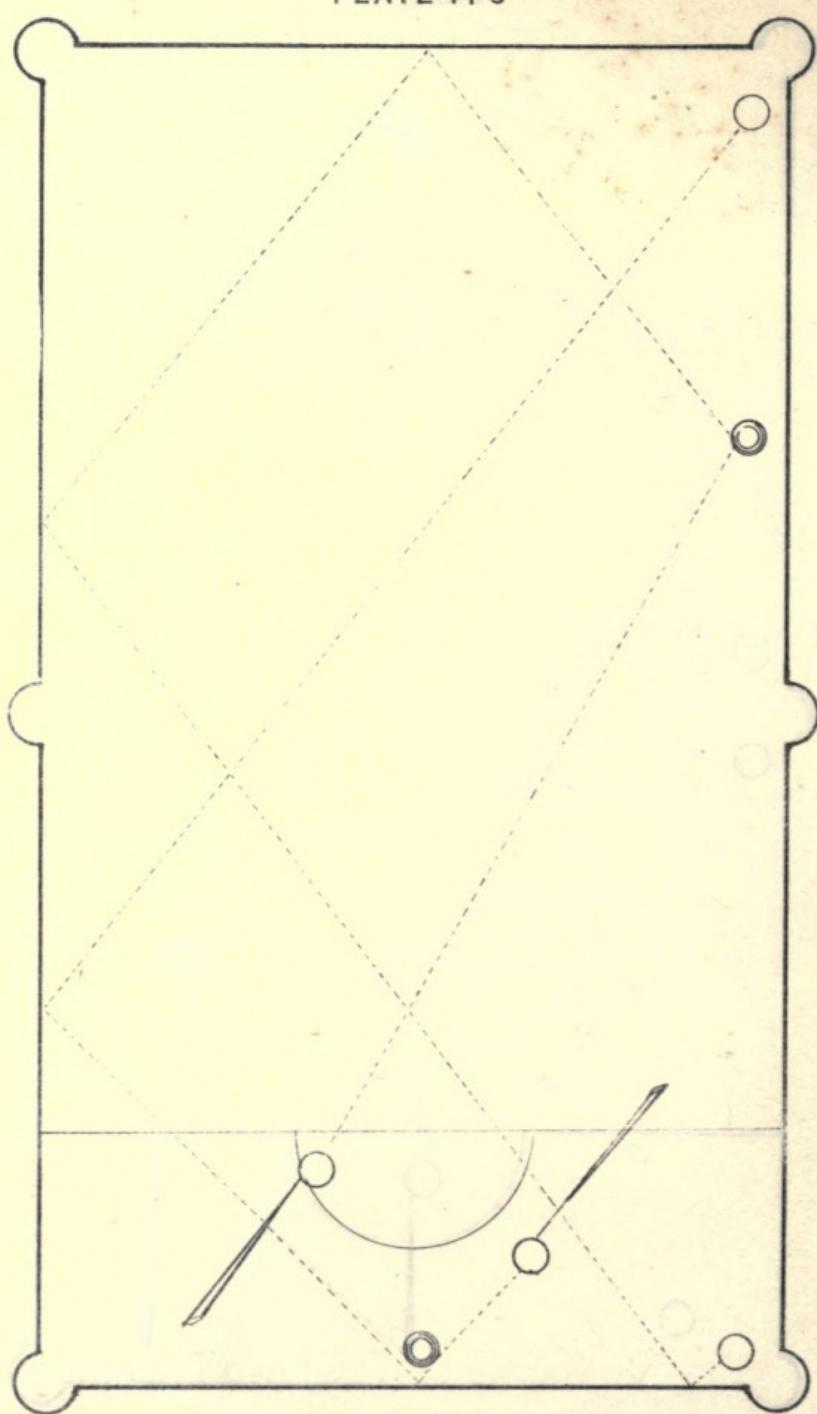


PLATE 147

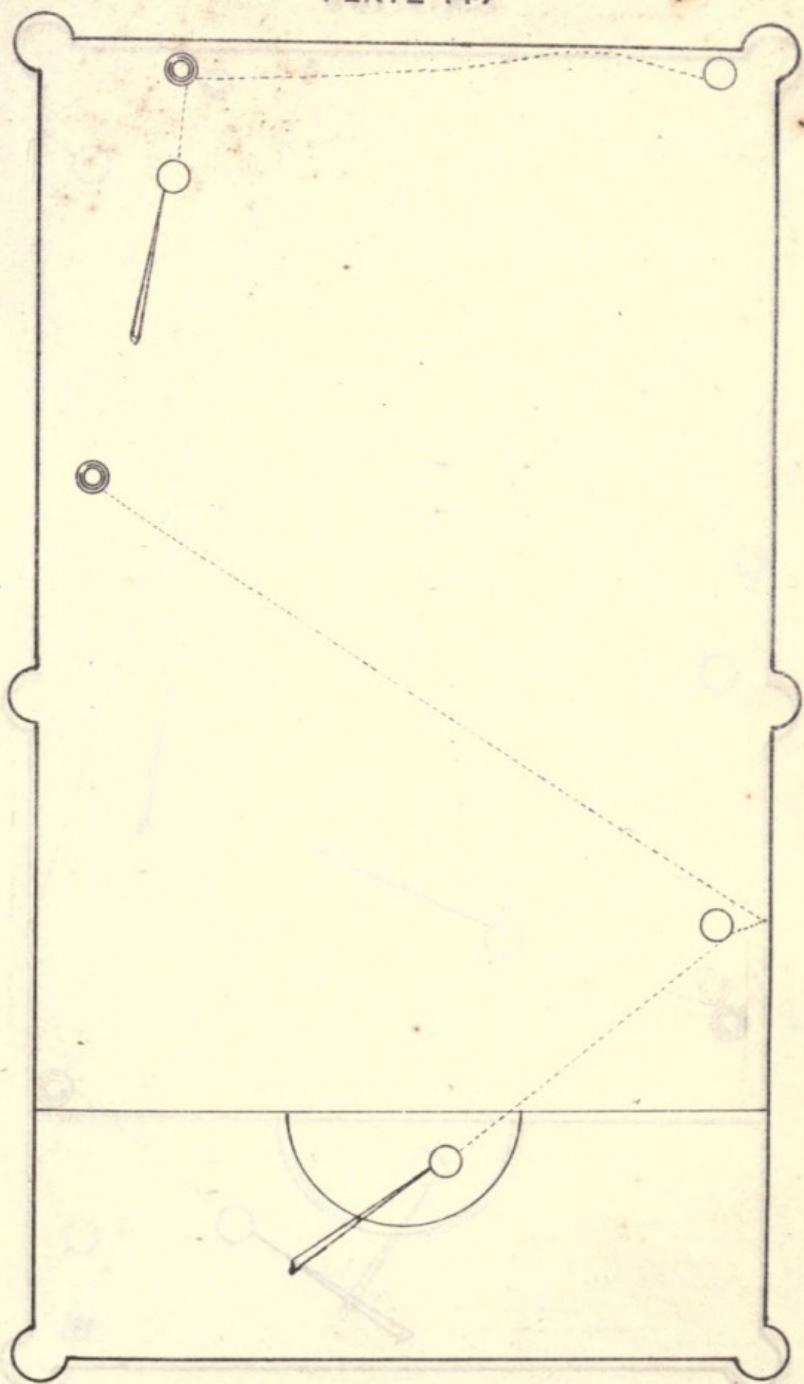


PLATE 148

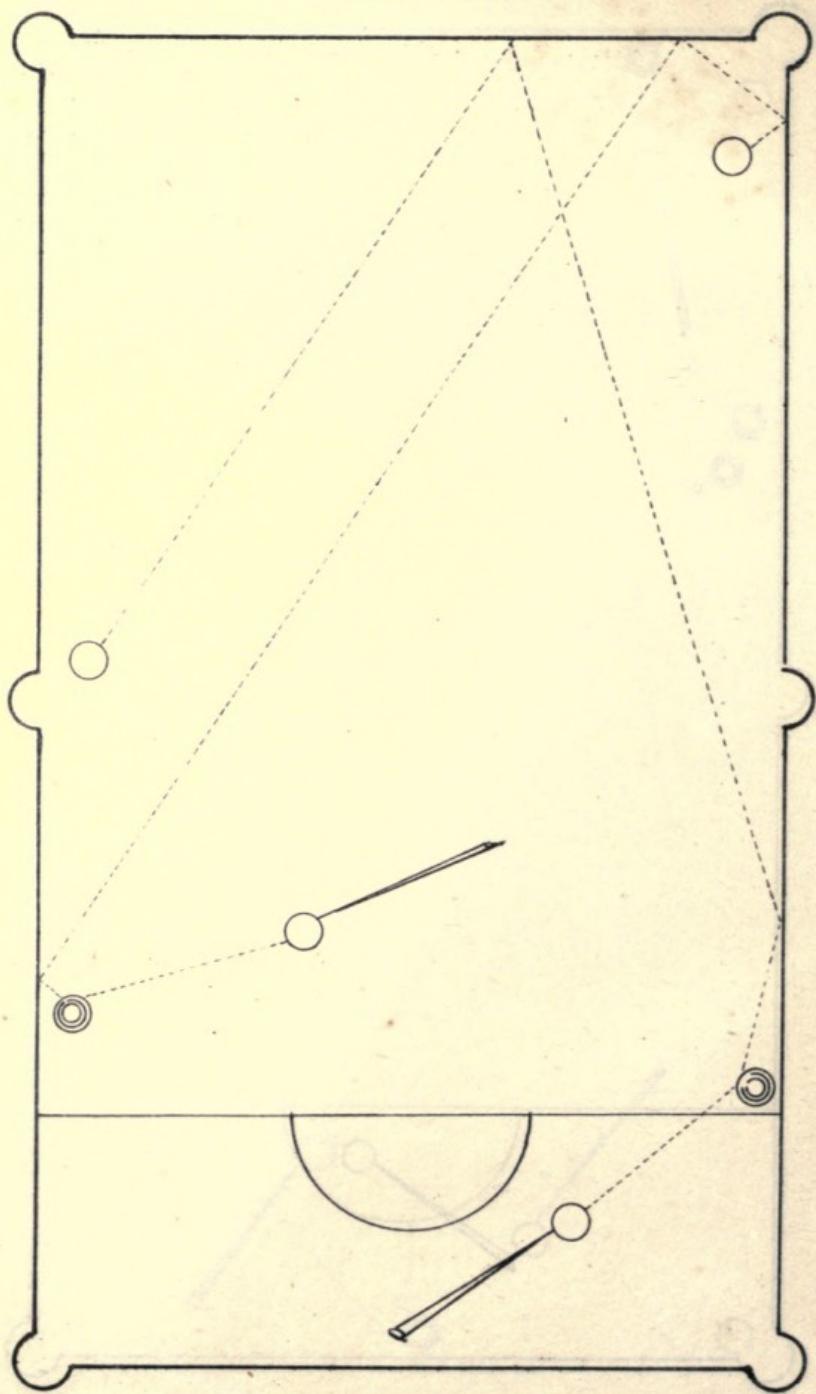


PLATE 149

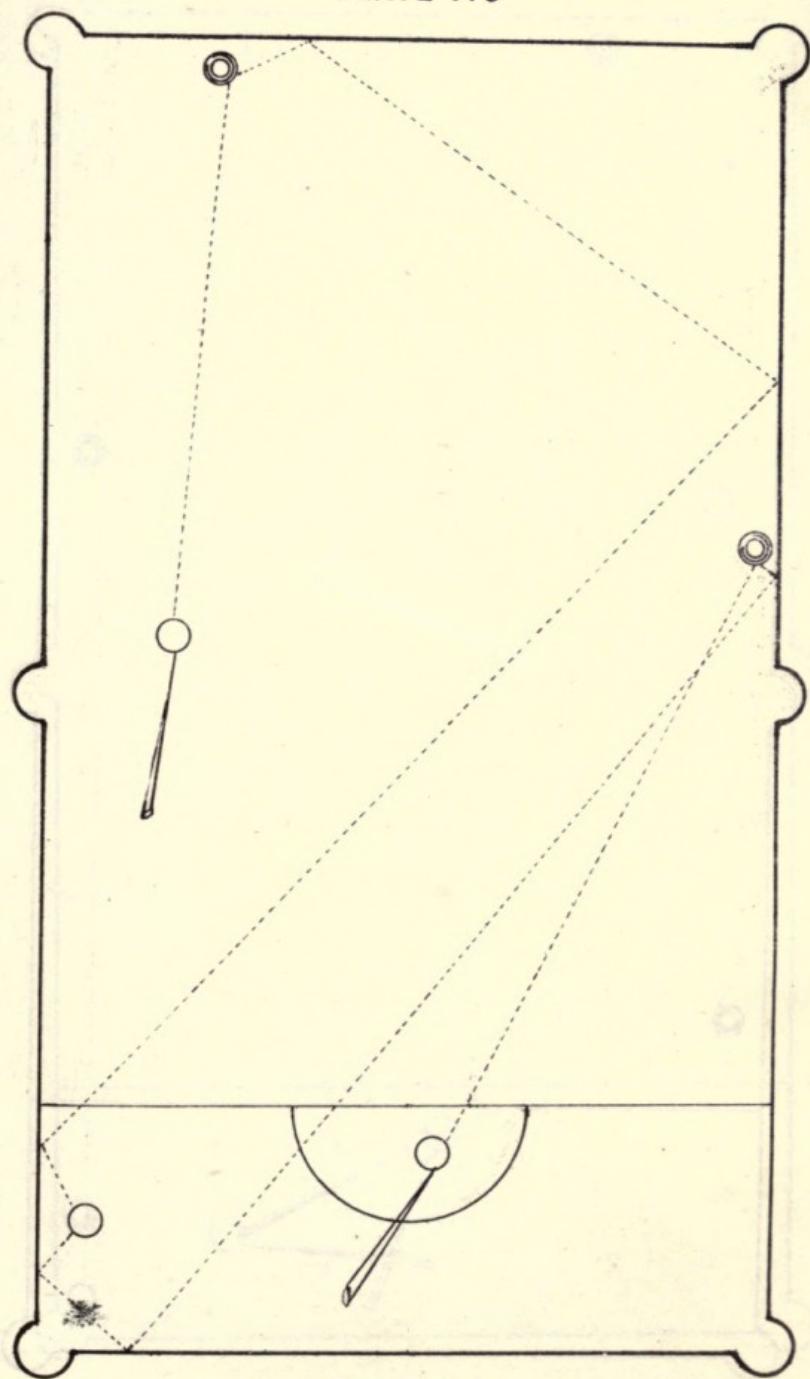


PLATE 150

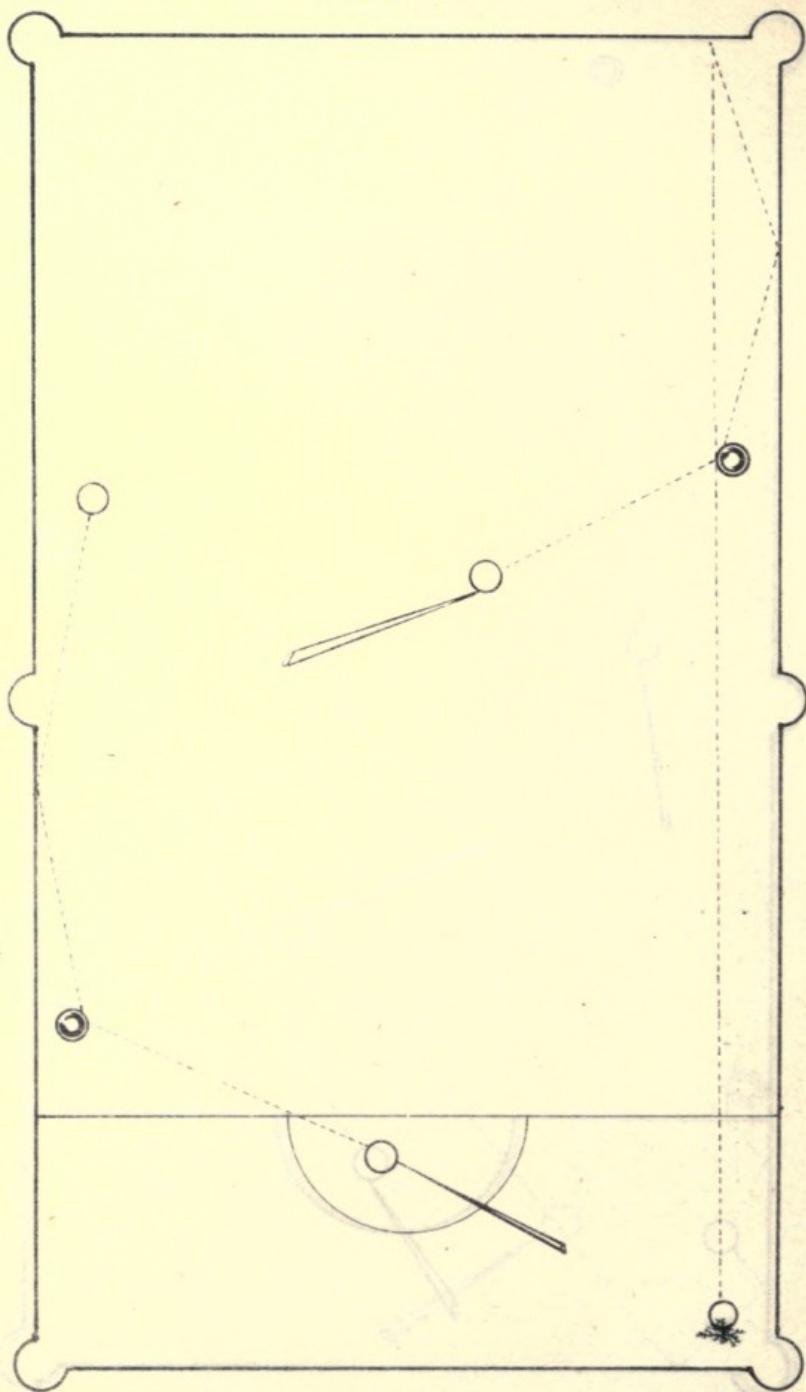


PLATE 151

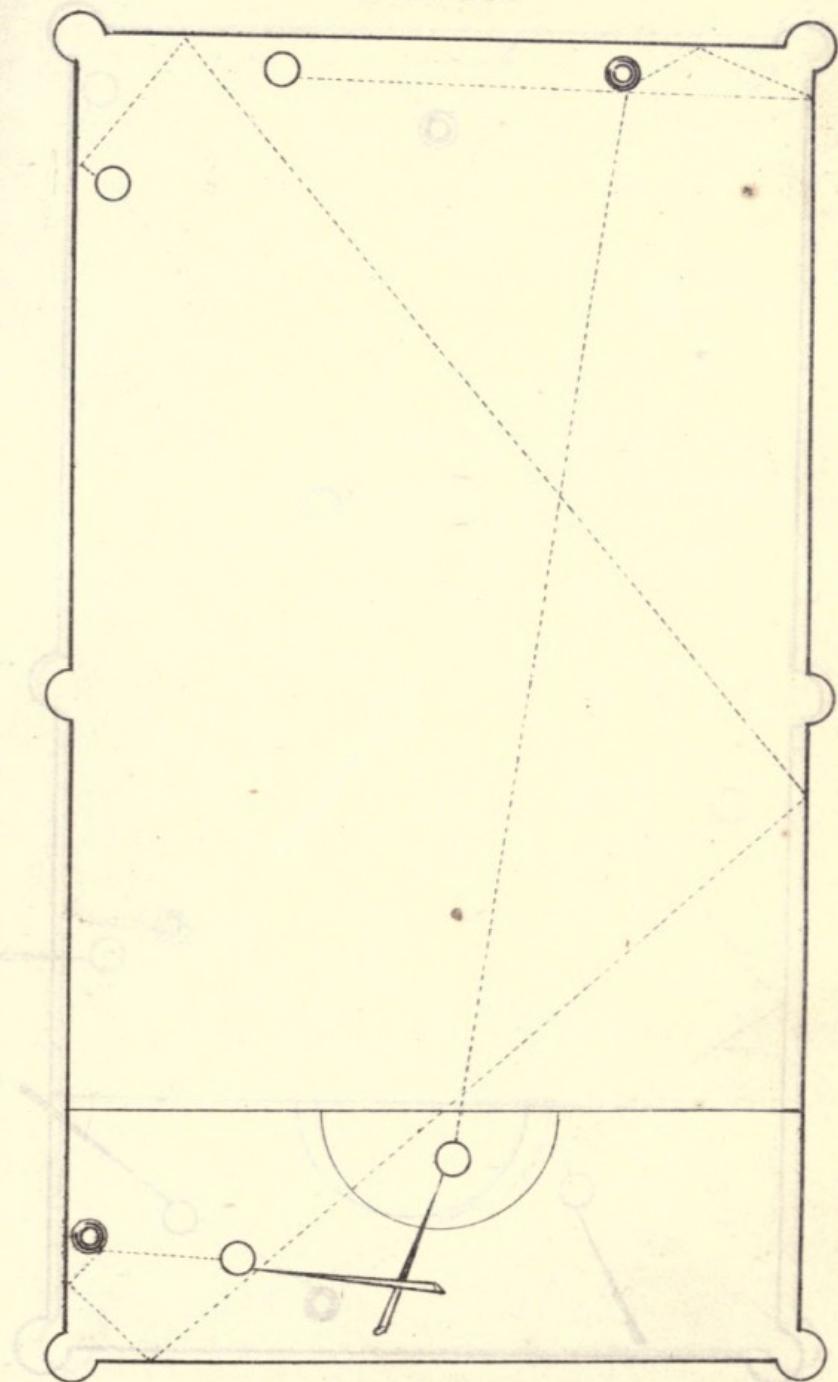


PLATE I52

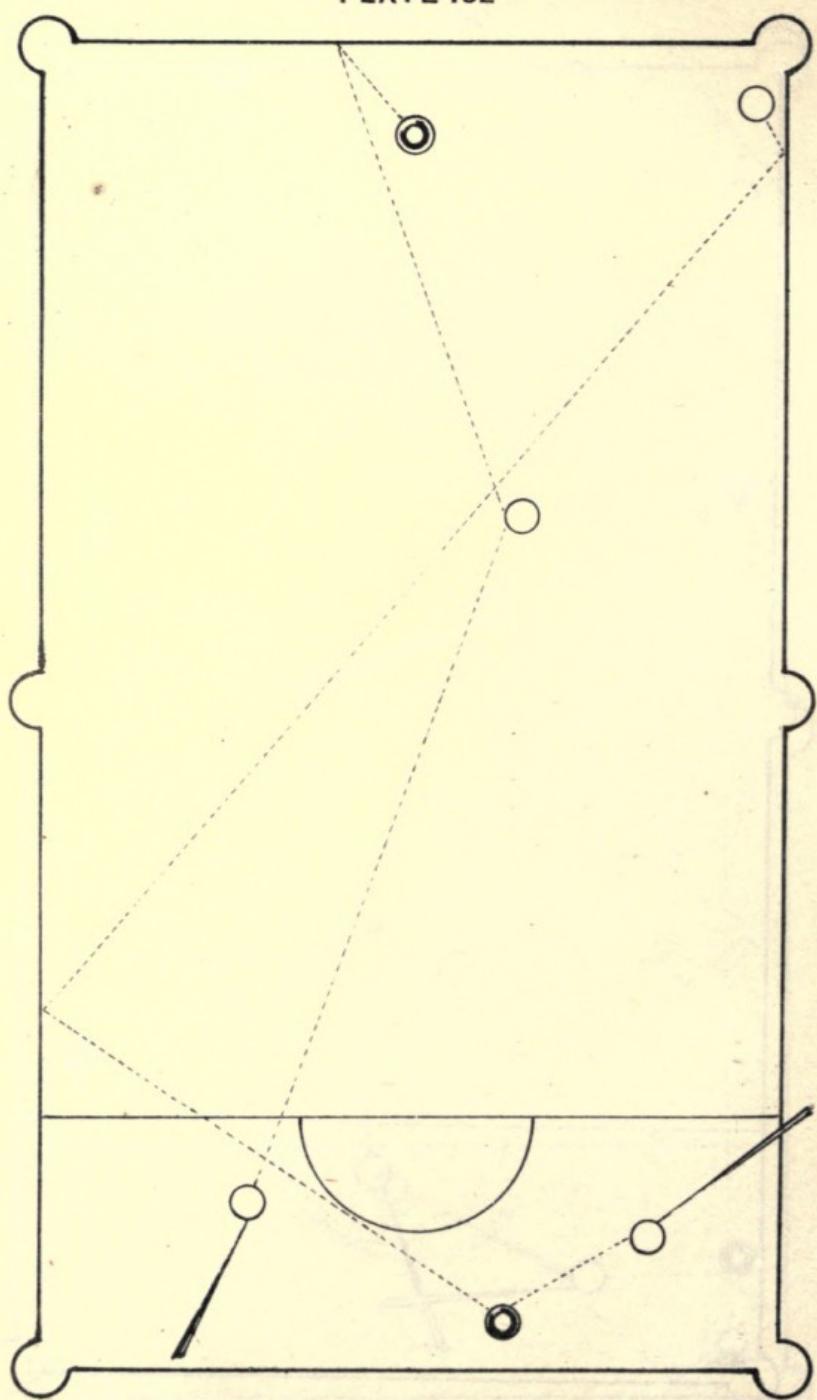


PLATE 153

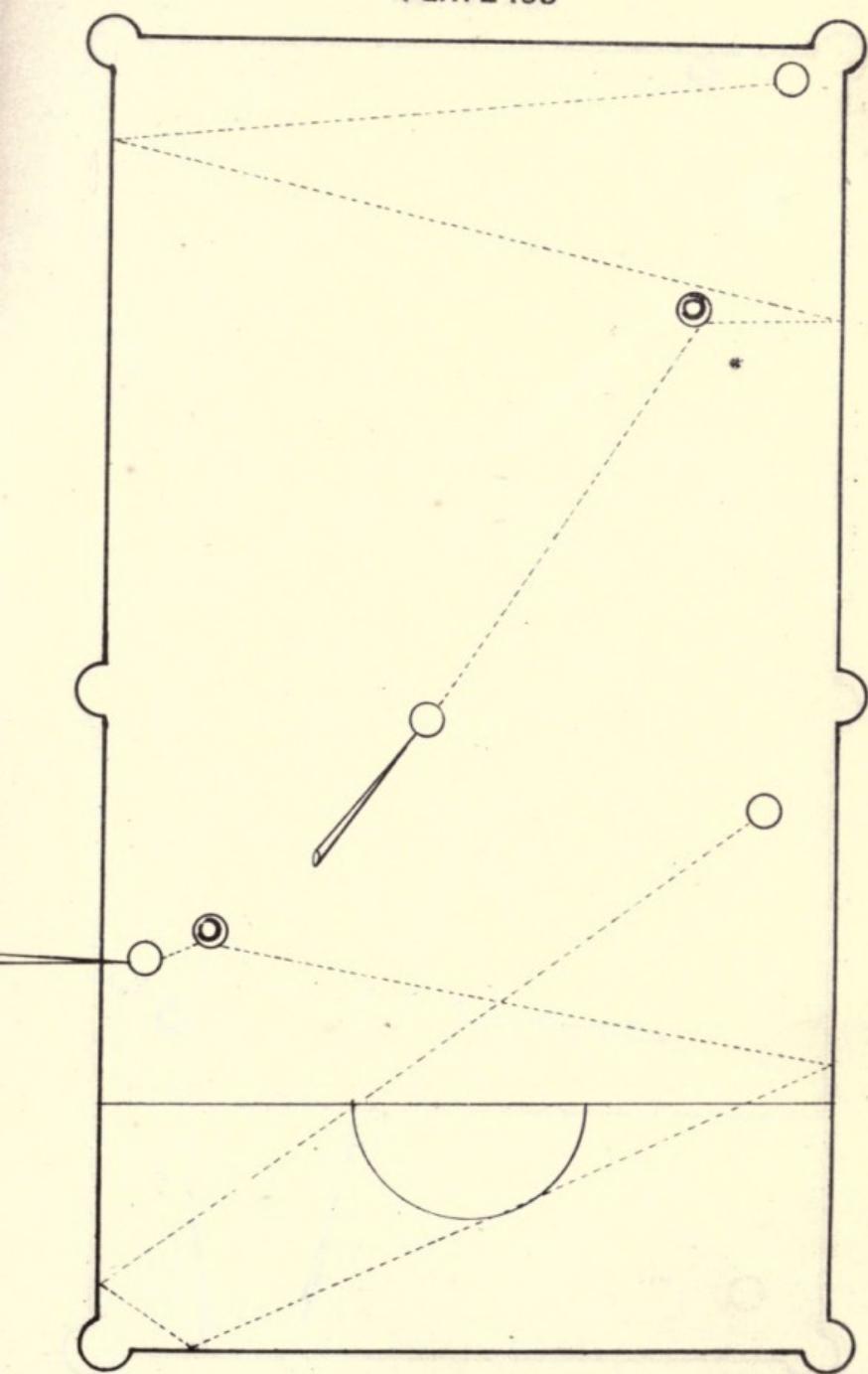


PLATE 154

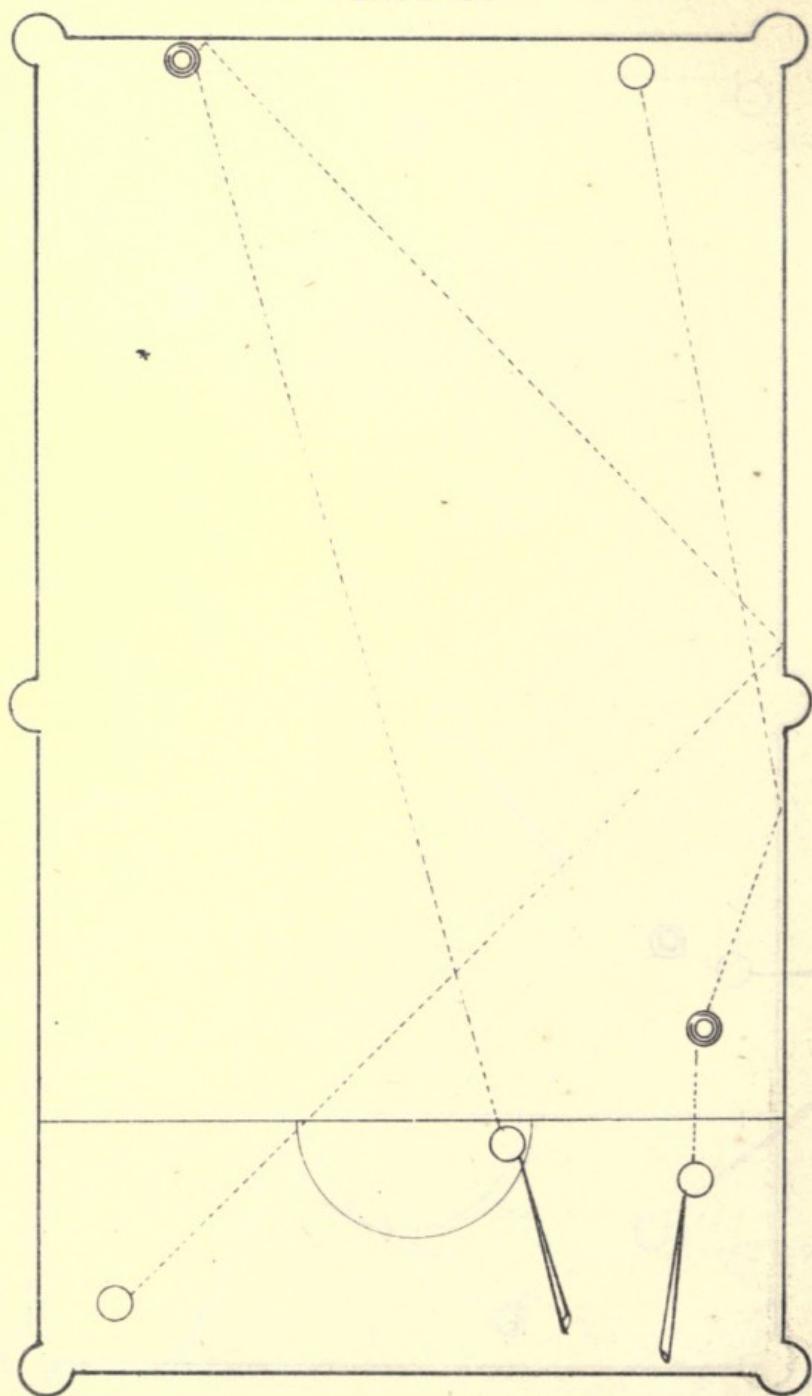


PLATE 155

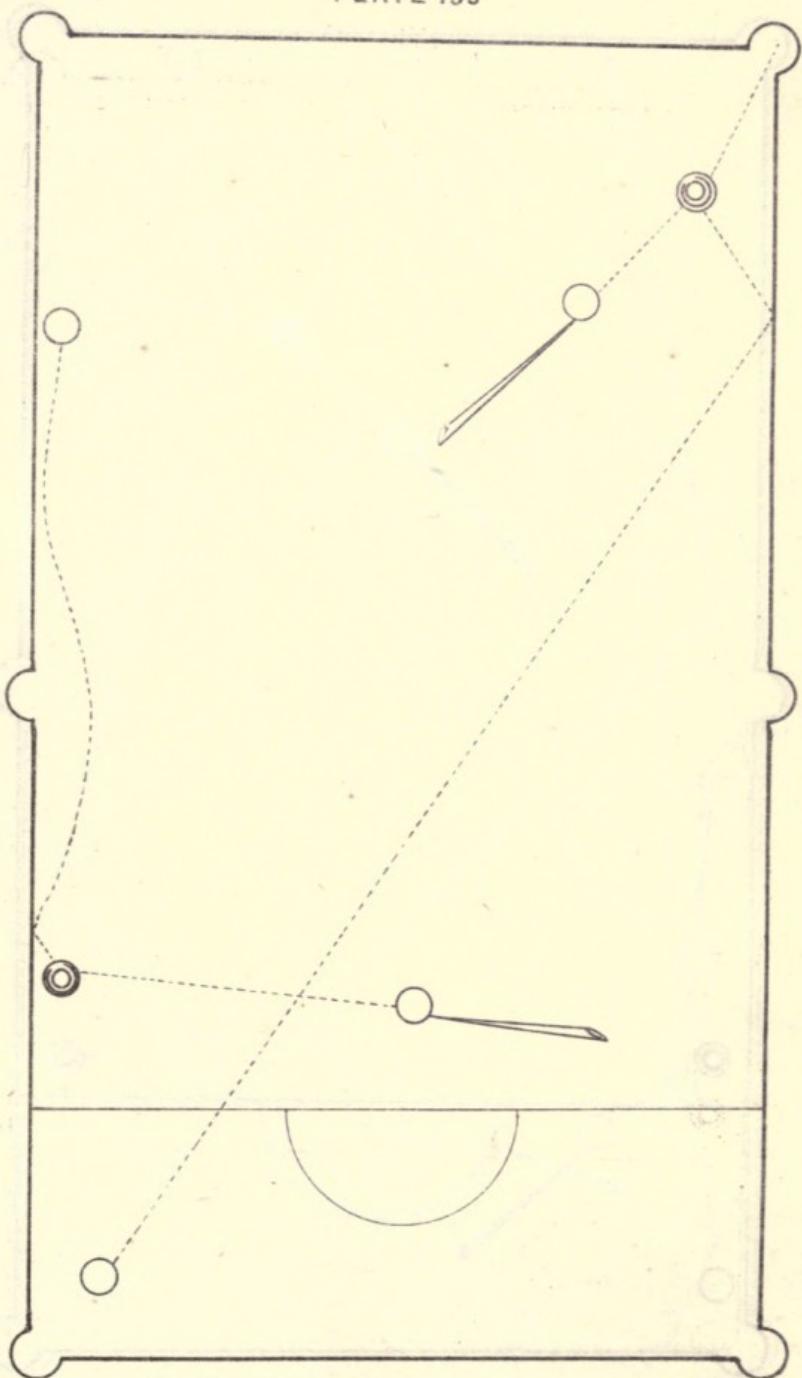


PLATE 156

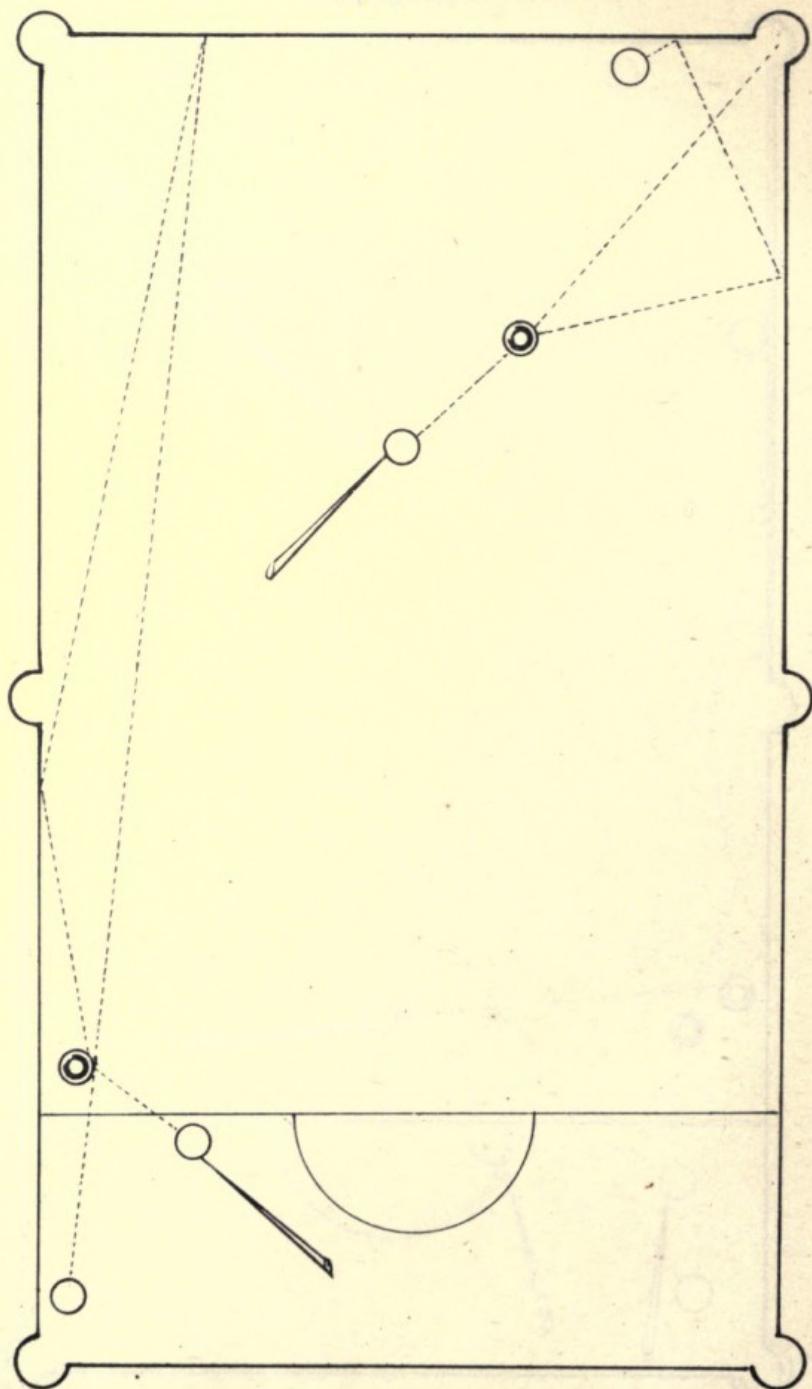


PLATE 157

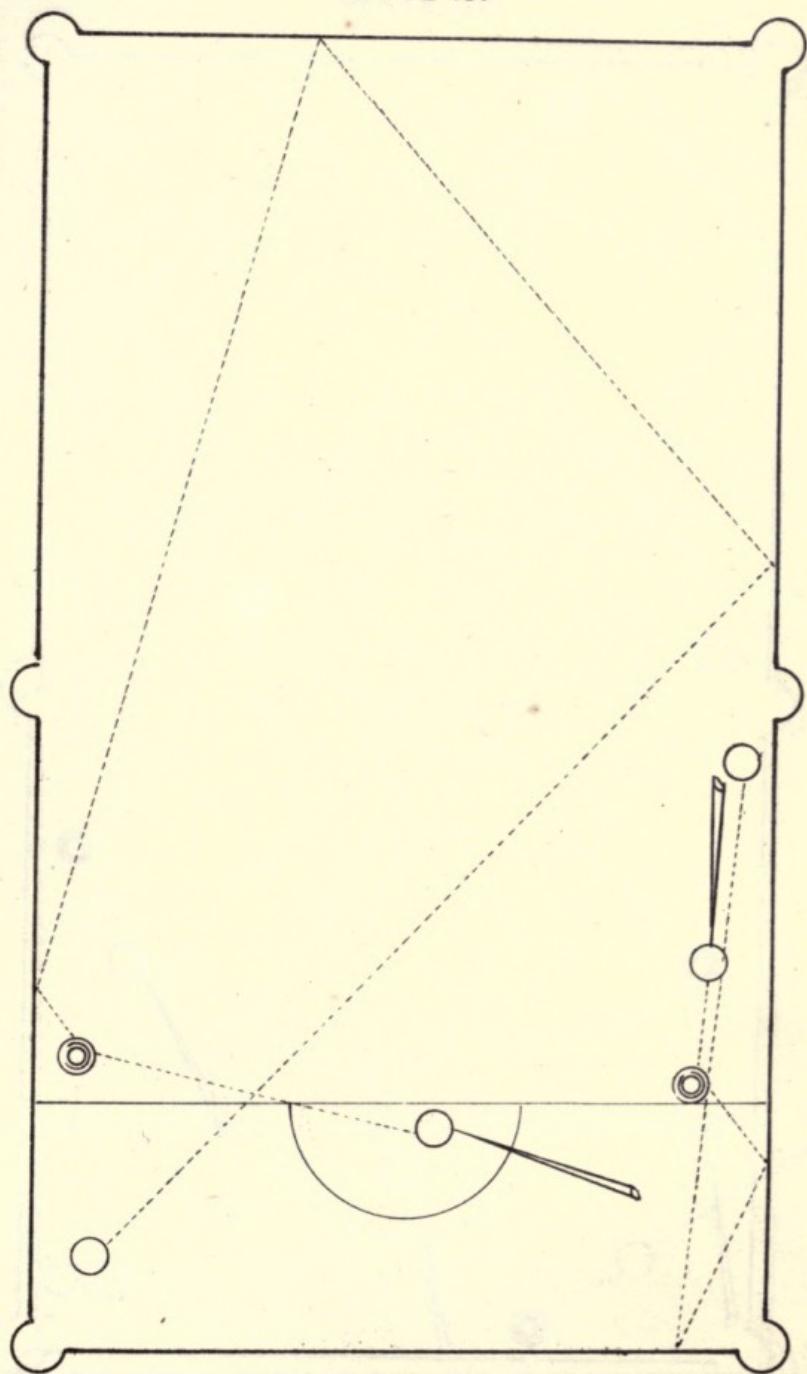


PLATE 158

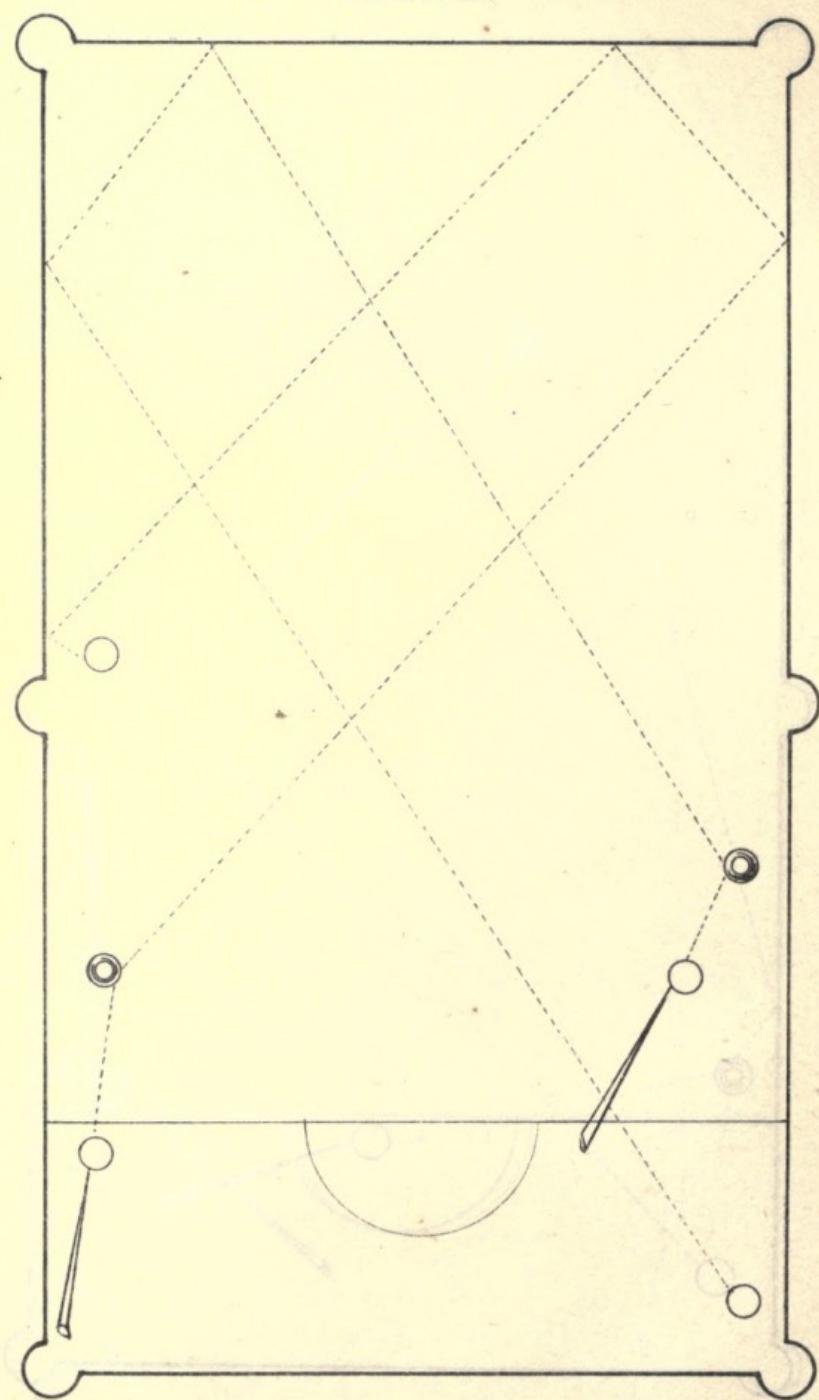


PLATE 159

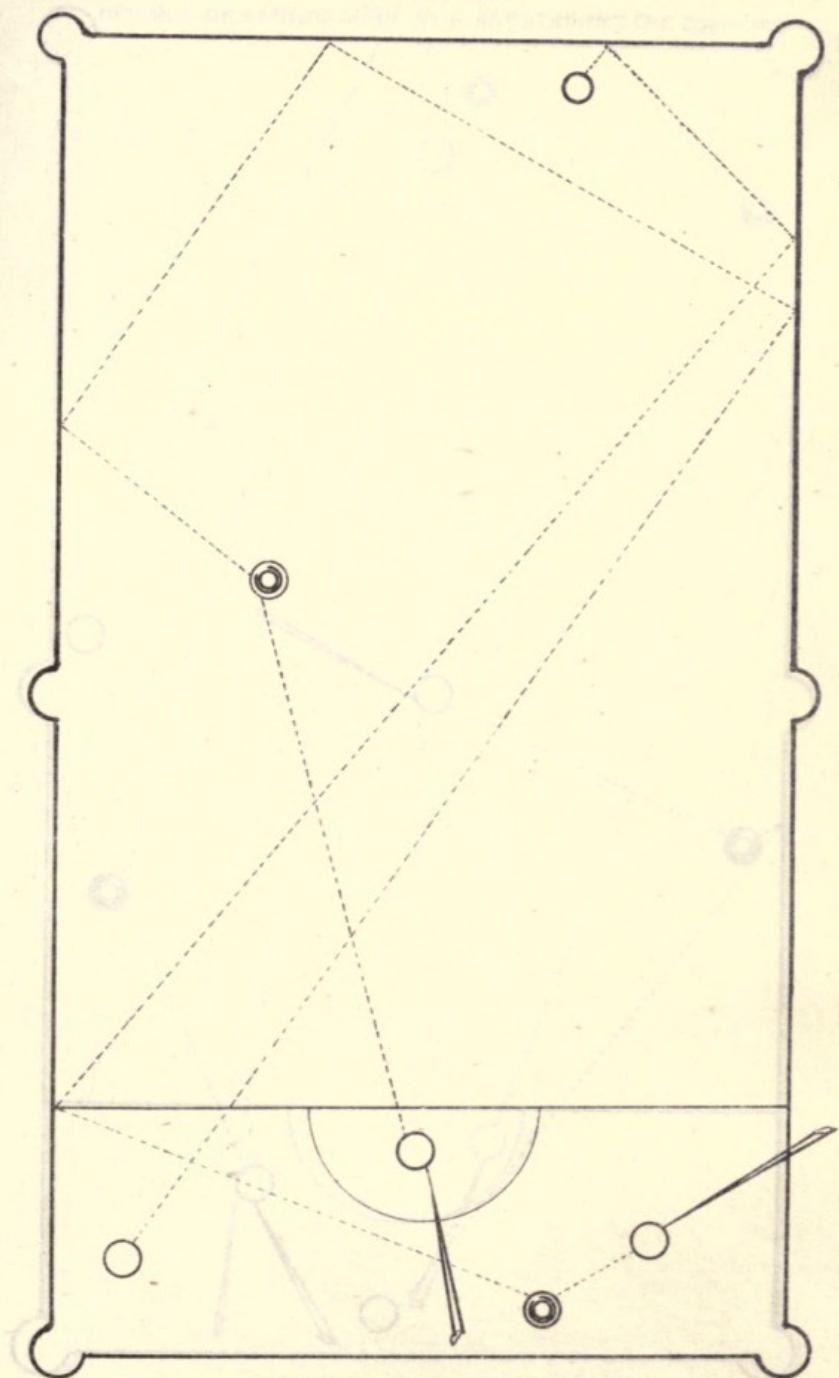


PLATE 160

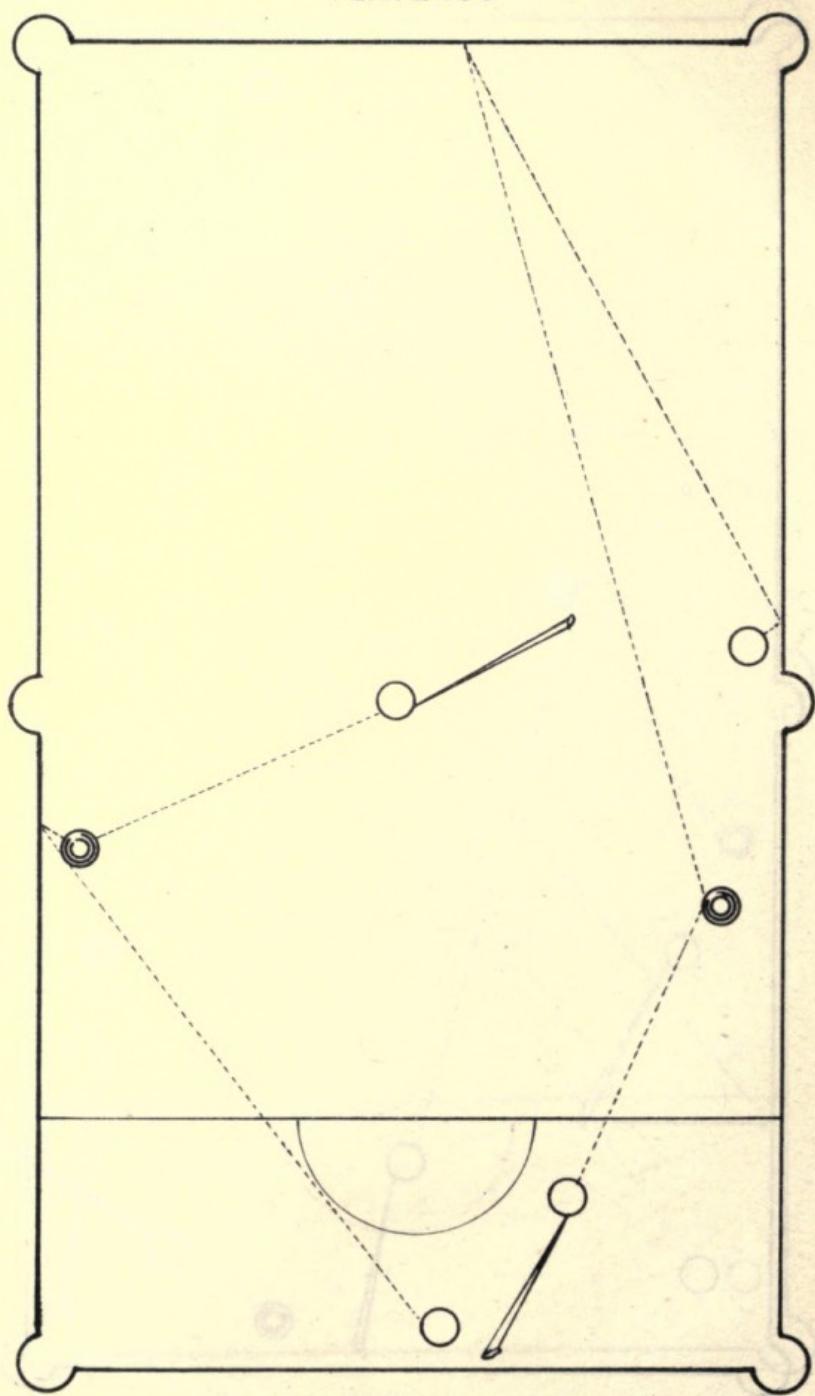


PLATE 161

BRICOLE OR CANONS MADE BY FIRST STRIKING THE CUSHIONS.

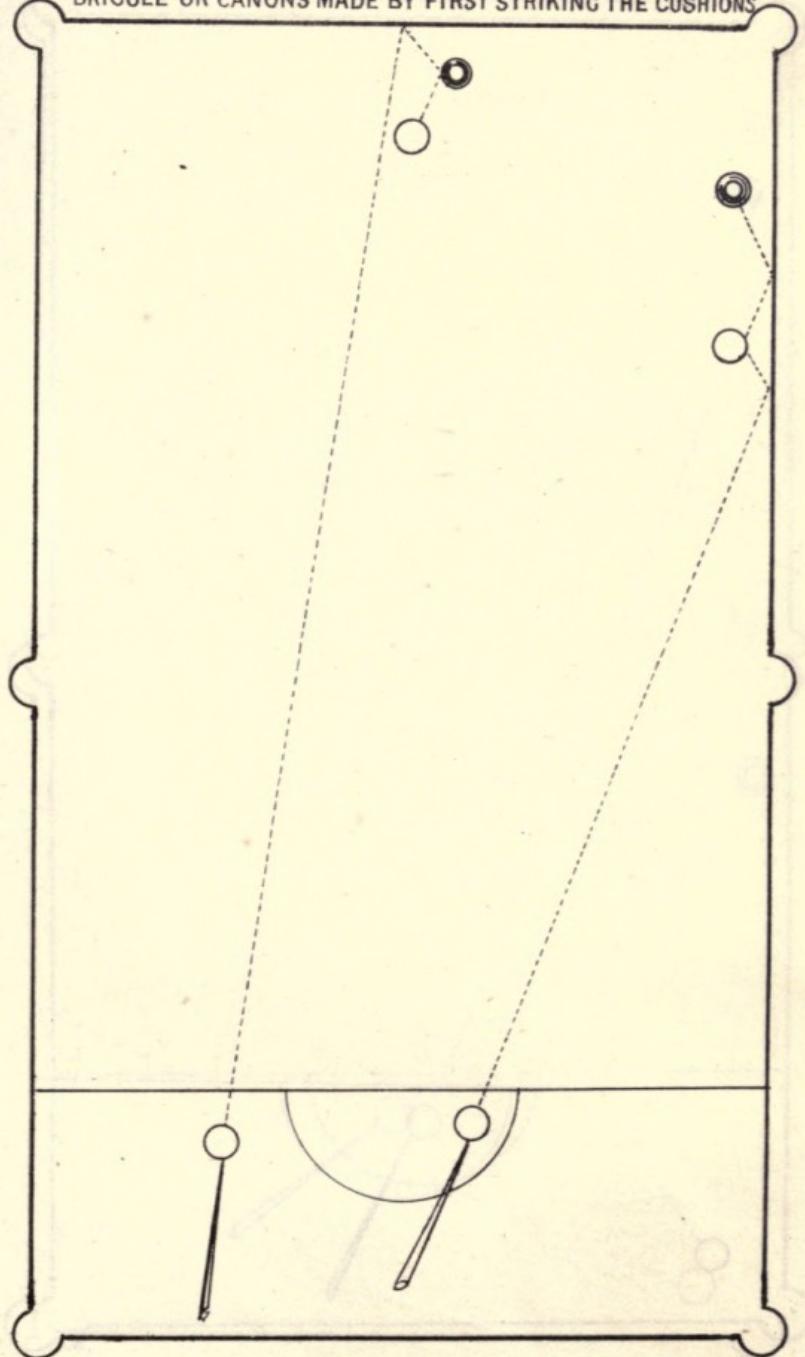


PLATE 162

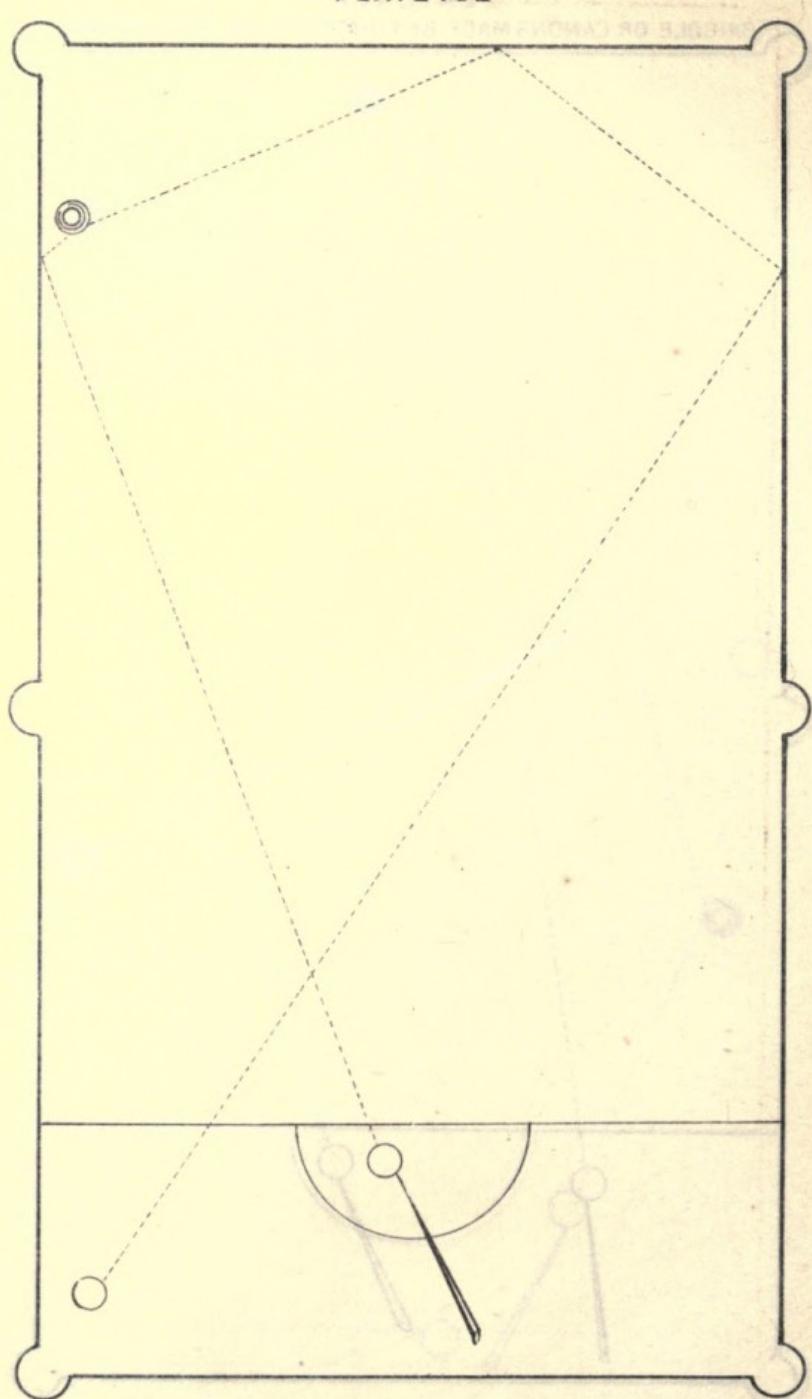
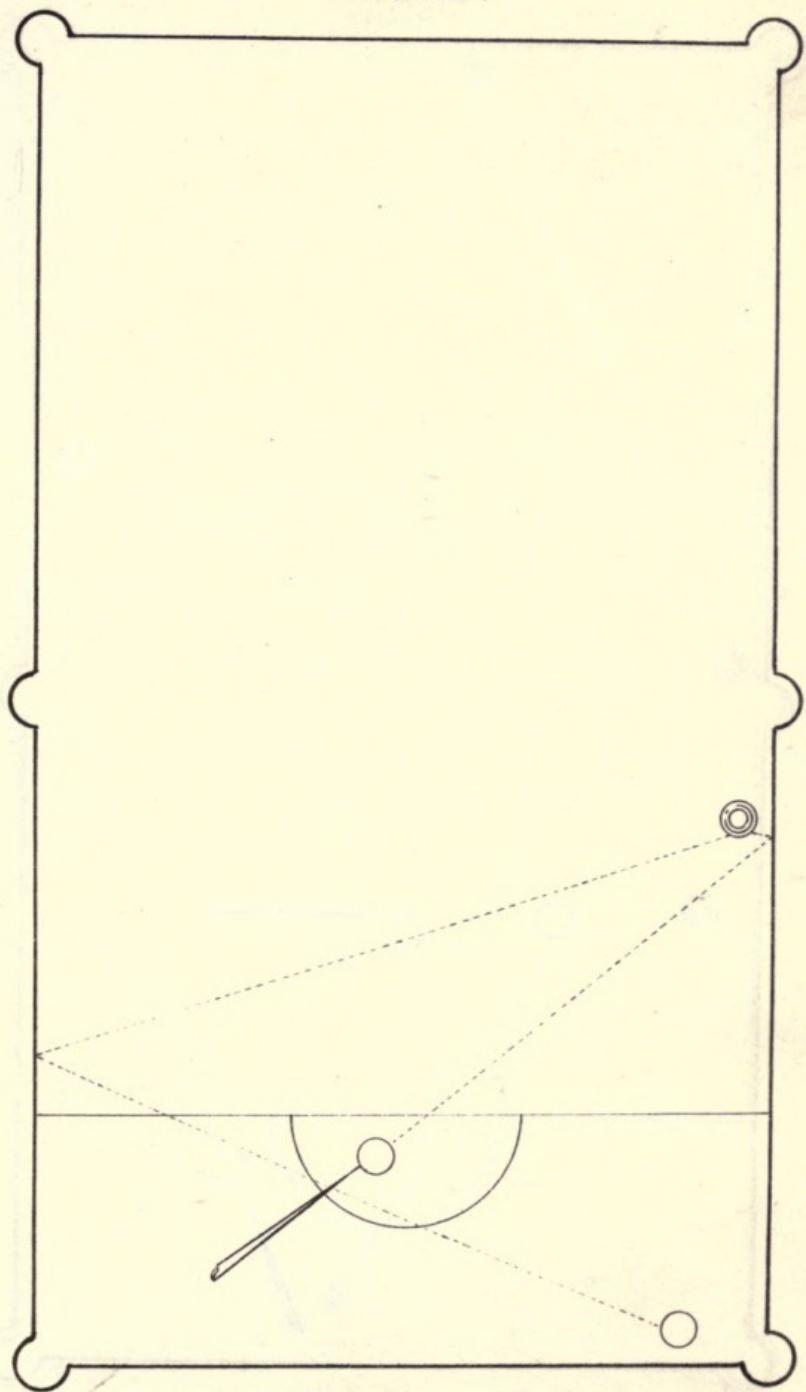


PLATE 163



Y

PLATE 164

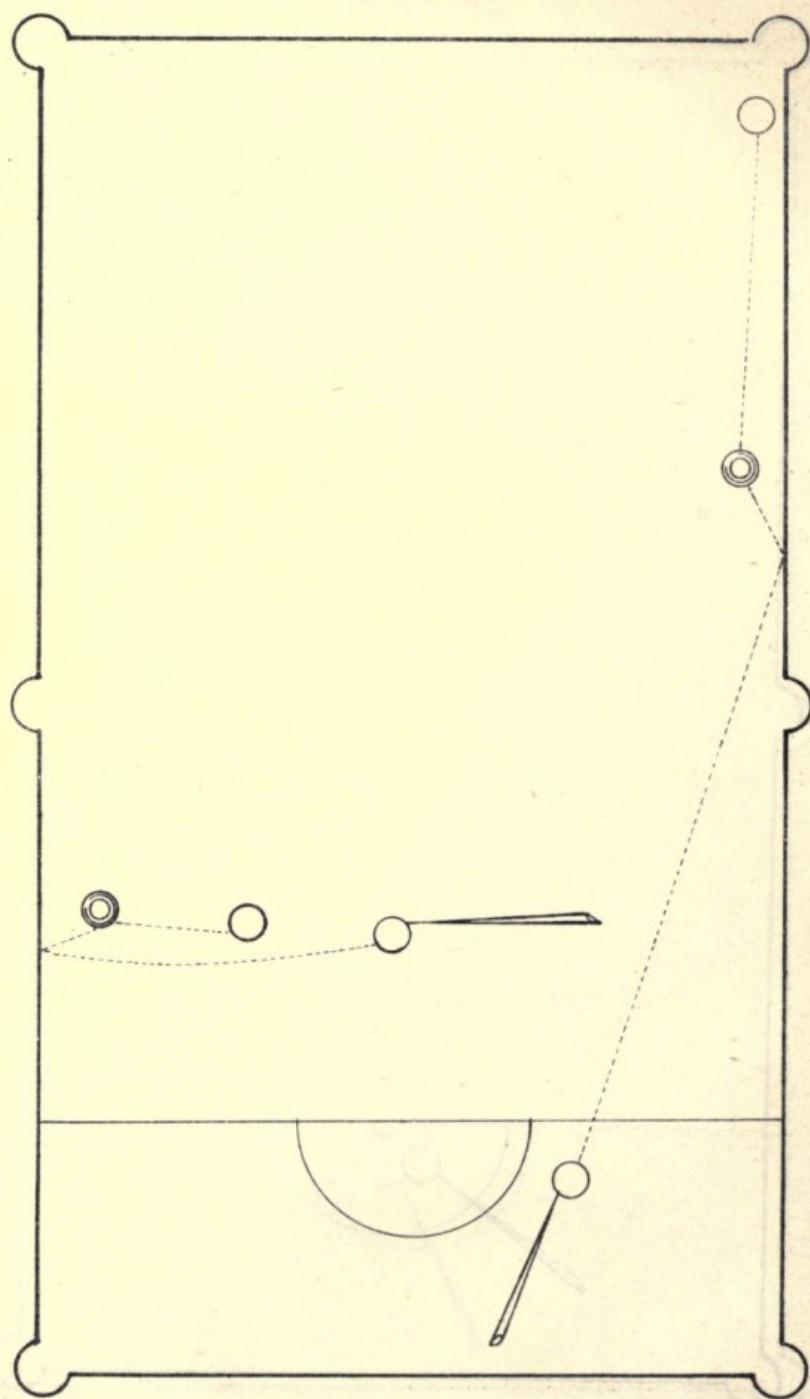


PLATE 165
CANON

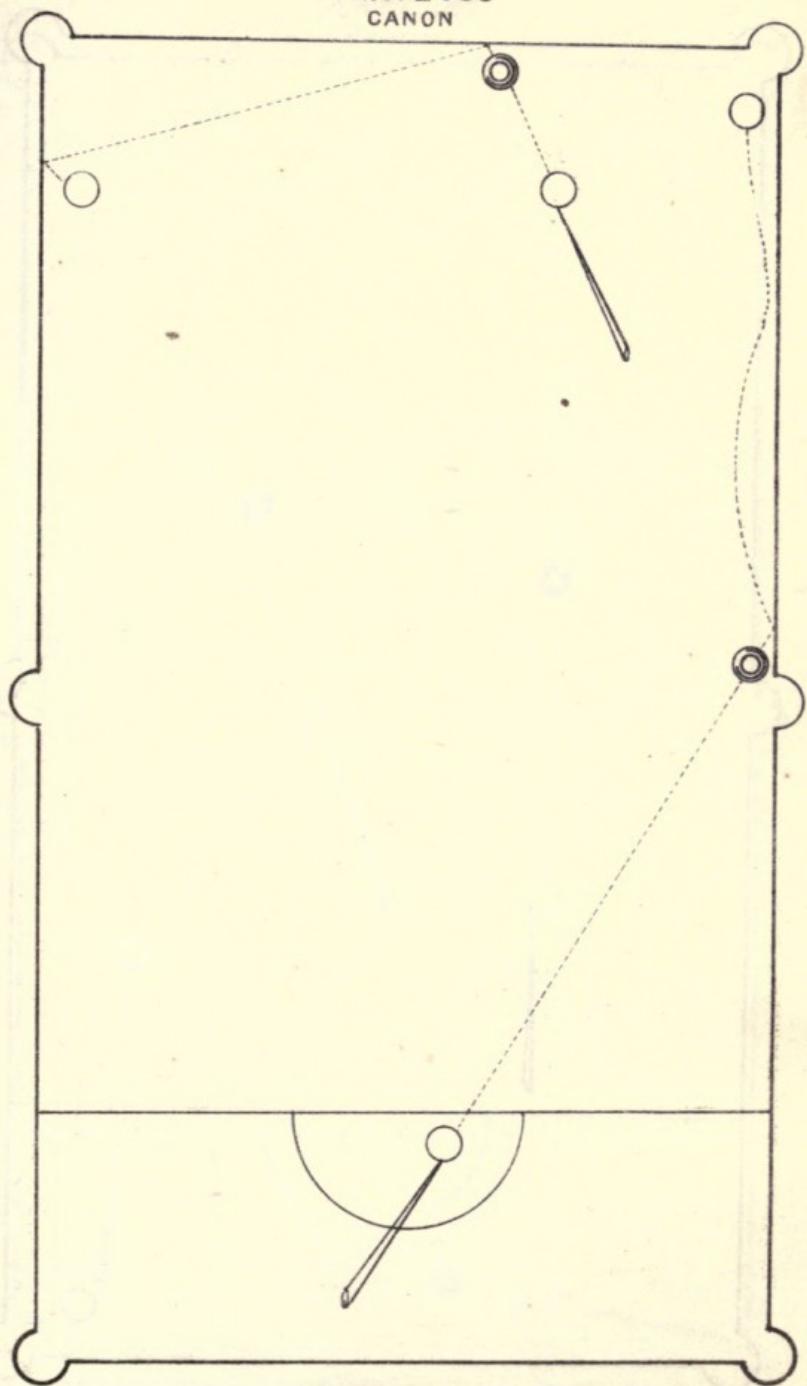


PLATE 166

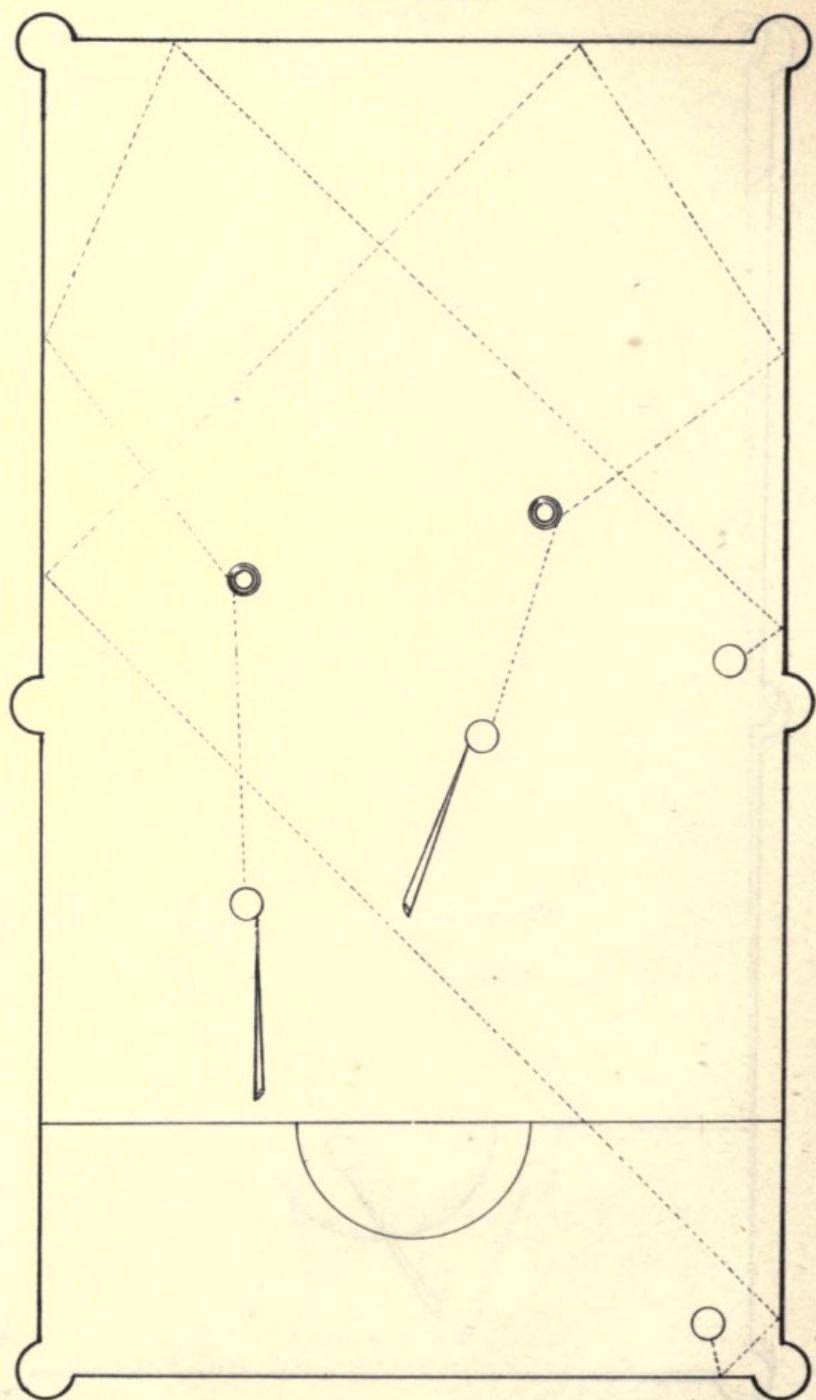


PLATE 167
CANON

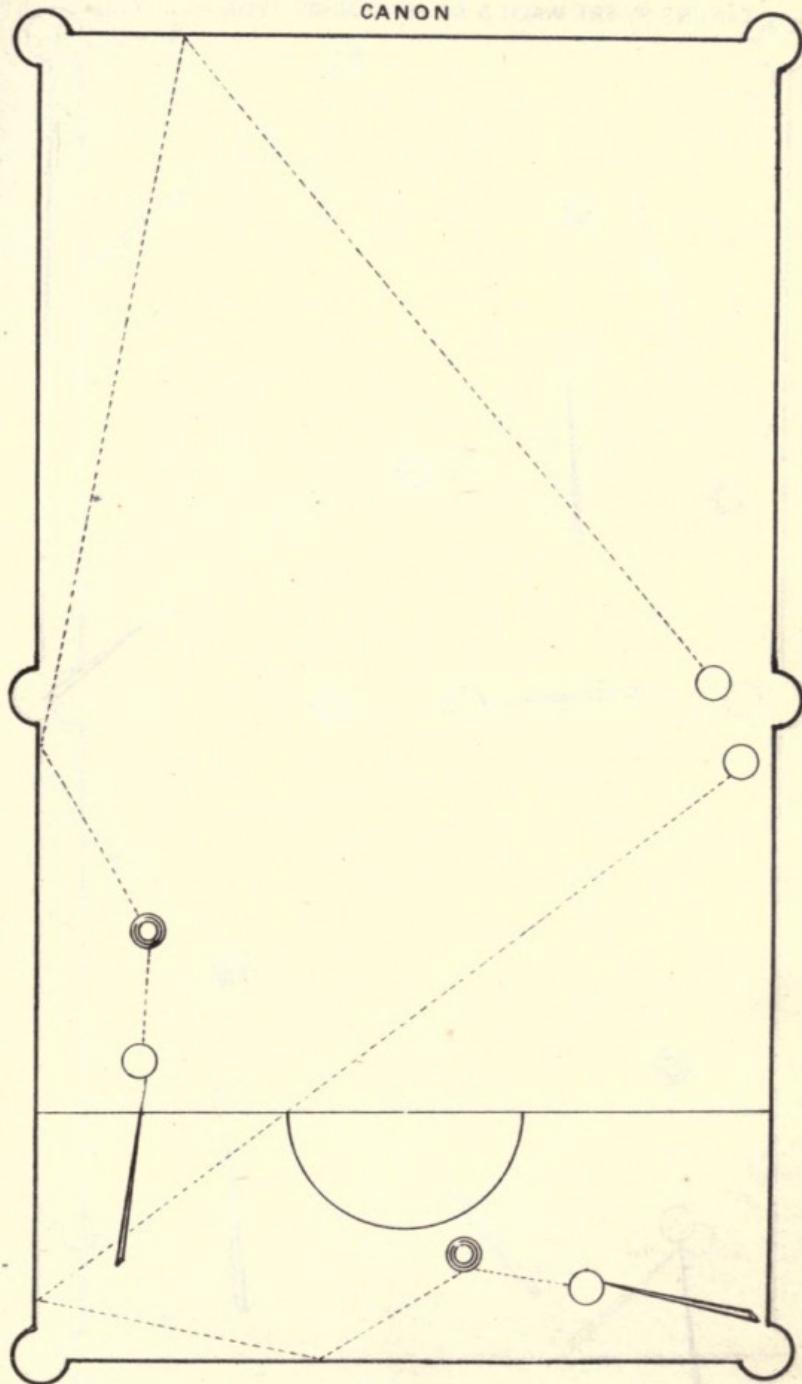


PLATE 168

CANONS BY THE WALK & BY THE TWIST — FOR PRACTICE

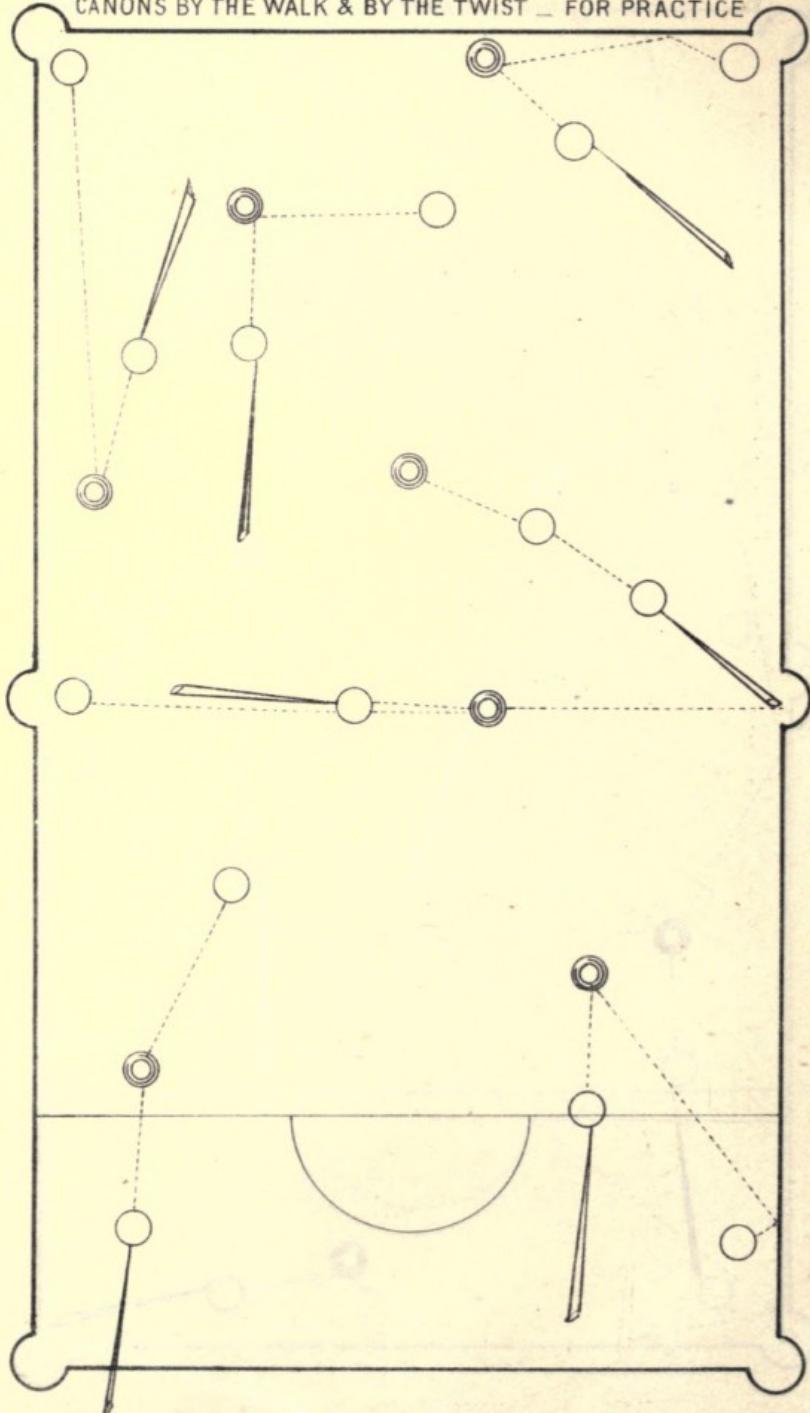


PLATE 169
CANONS COMBINING THE DOUBLE.

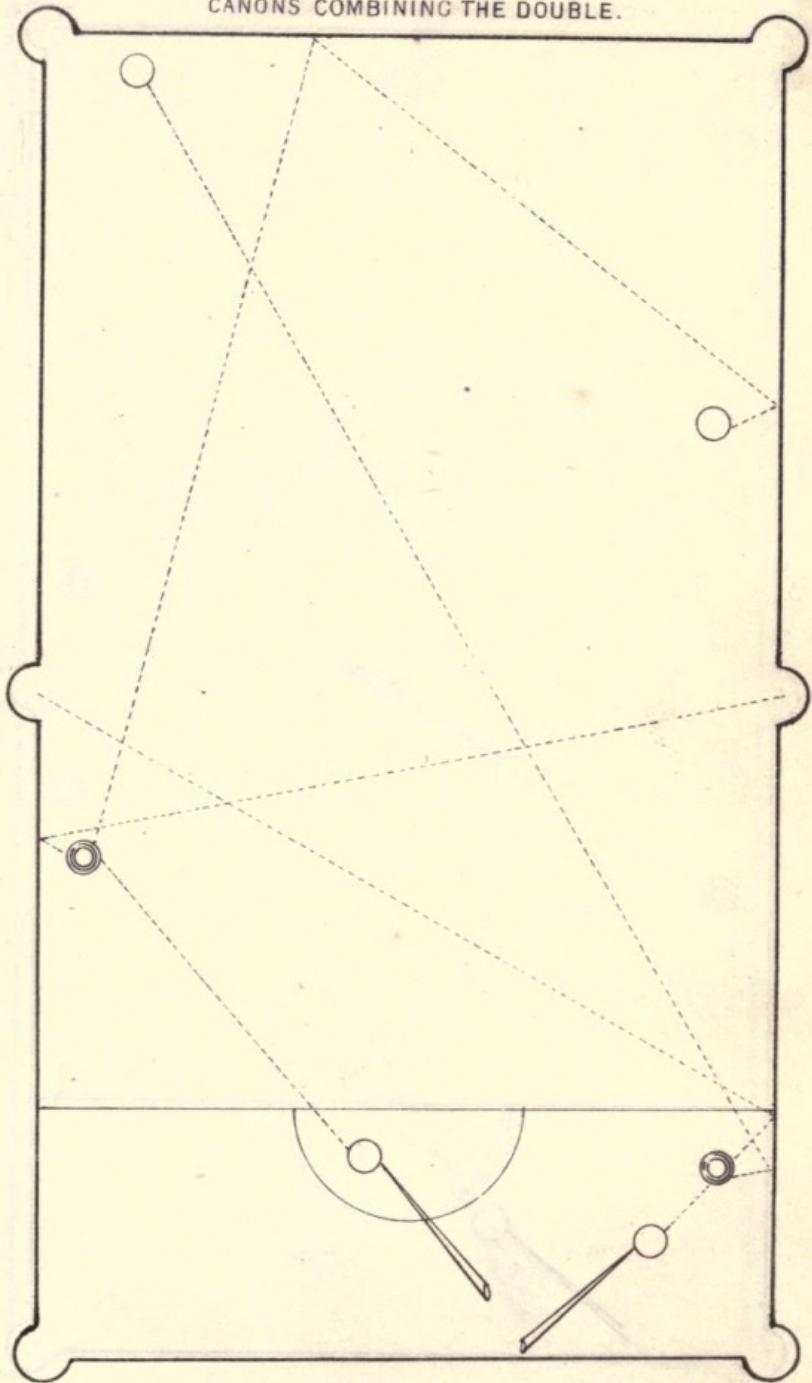


PLATE 170
CANONS COMBINING THE DOUBLE

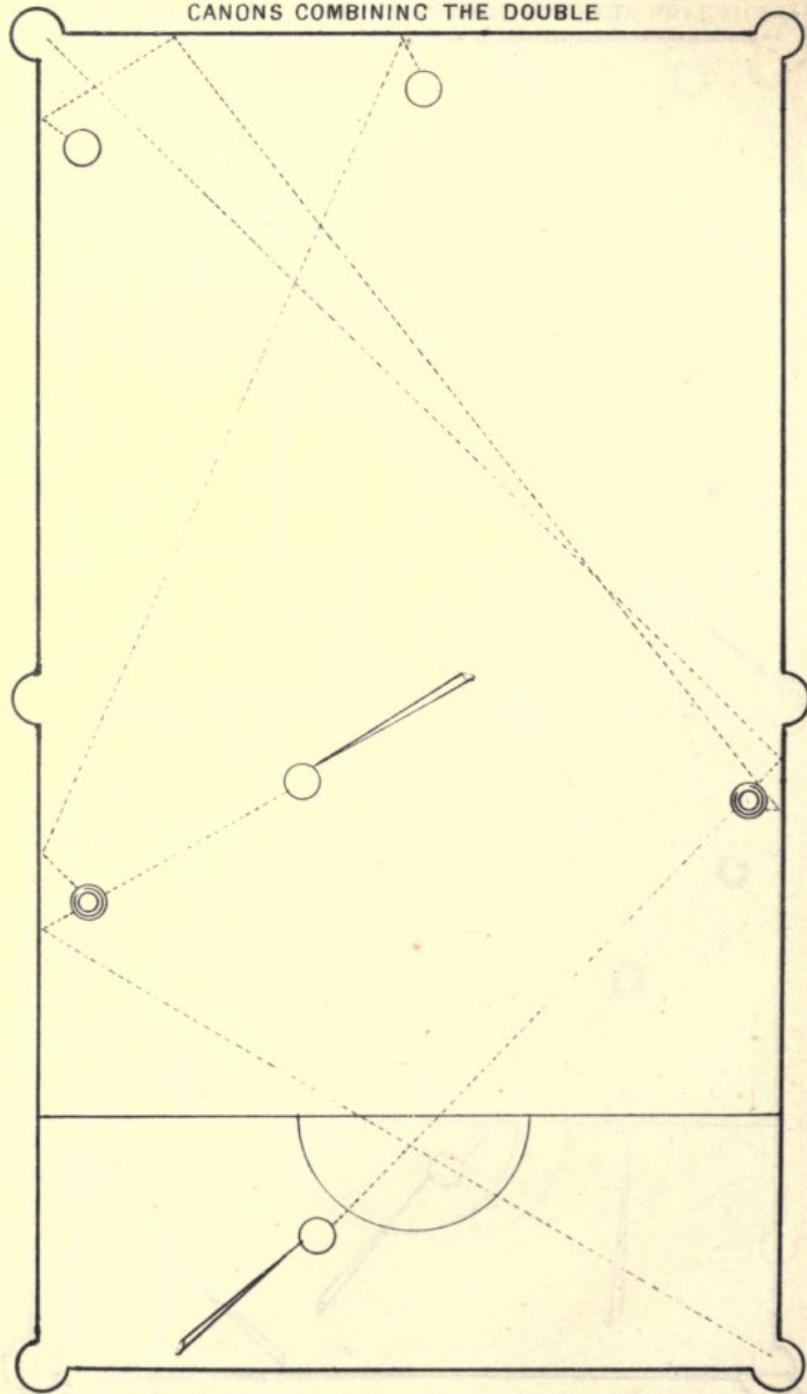


PLATE I7I
CANONS BY THREE METHODS

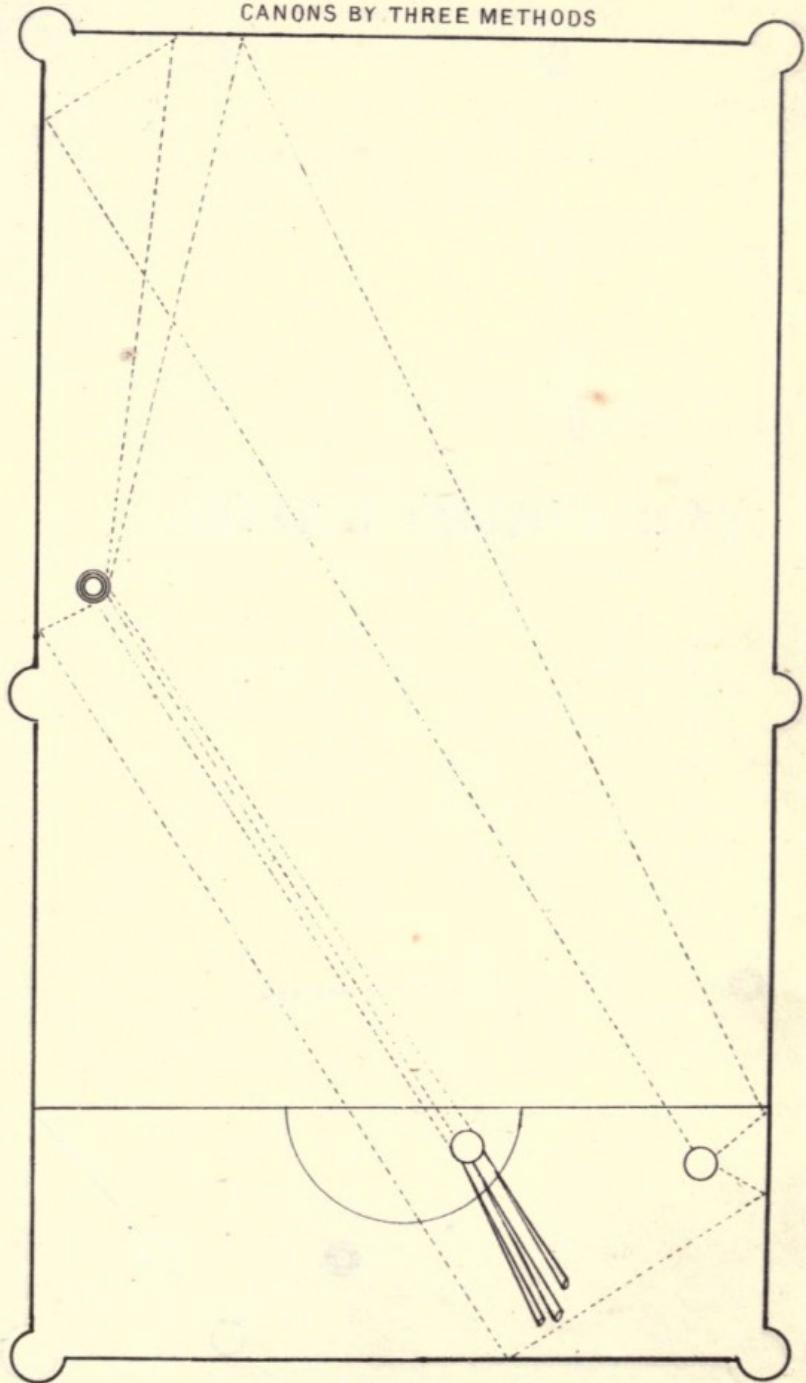
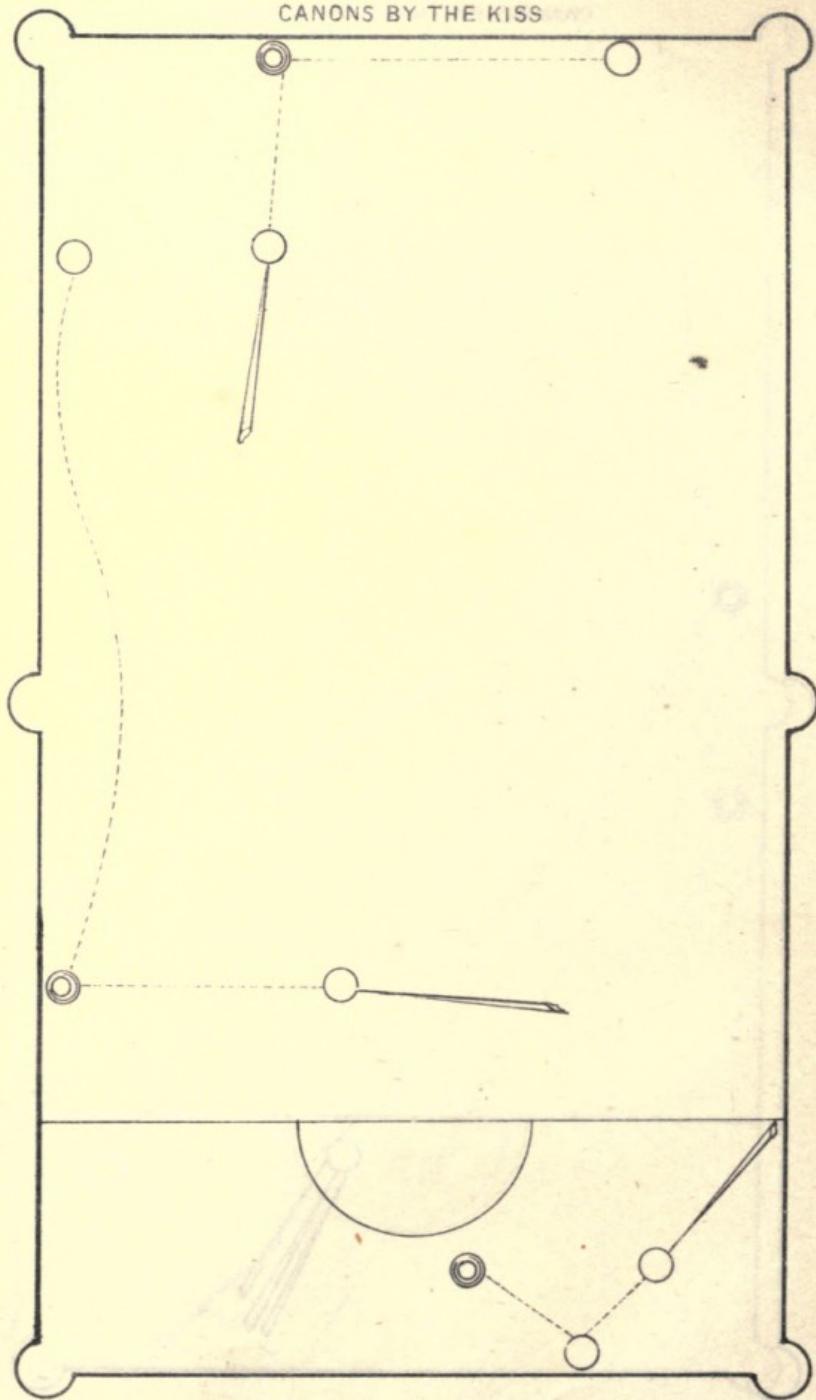


PLATE 172
CANONS BY THE KISS



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE BILLIARD ROOM AT THE COCOA-TREE CLUB.

The advantages derived from converting a winning into a losing hazard have been already described. The winning hazards thus converted—exhibited in Plate 141 —were, in a succession of games, repeatedly made by the present Superintendent of the Billiard Room at the Cocoa-Tree Club ; in fact I cannot call to mind a single instance of his having missed one. The score is uncertain, the execution somewhat difficult ; and I have seen those considered the best of players frequently fail in the attempt. The accomplishment of them, therefore, by the person now described, proclaims at once the superiority of his powers. The excellence displayed in the correctness of the delivery of the cue, and, consequently, the certainty of his hazard striking is, nevertheless, in my opinion, less remarkable, less wonderful than the extreme delicacy and gentleness of his strengths. I have seen in the course of my experience nearly every player of note ; have carefully watched their games, and

even now can retain in my memory every excellency that created either delight or surprise ; but the games I have lately witnessed played by this person, excel in beauty all I have hitherto observed, and leave the mind nothing to suggest or the imagination anything to realize. Acknowledging himself to be a nervous player he might probably succumb if opposed to professionals of eminence, but when he has been contending with members of the Club to whom he has been giving nearly half the game, I have at all times witnessed an execution scarcely to be surpassed, and a refinement of strength I never yet saw equalled. All that I could inculcate ; everything I could wish to impress upon the minds of those desirous of playing the game correctly, were embodied in those games.

M. BERGER.

The laudatory remarks addressed to the players of the English game may be, with every degree of propriety, closely associated with the name of the French Professor that adorns this article. Mr. Pook—whose knowledge of the game and whose scientific properties are well known—assures me that in the games he lately played with him in Paris, M. Berger displayed a knowledge of the game and a brilliancy of execution that surpassed everything he could have supposed to be possible. The game played by this wonderful man is called the “Canon Game,” each canon scoring but one point; and I cannot fail, I imagine, of imparting to my readers a just estimate of his powers when I declare that he made in the presence of my informant, an Officer of the Guards, one hundred canons in successsion! It is the opinion of Mr. Pook that in the canon game of 100 up, upon a French table, M. Berger could give to Mr. Kentfield one fourth of the game. In the play, or rather display, of M. Berger, the stroke called to “Masser” is in great request; and the delivery of the cue is so governed and controlled that each object is obtained by a less or a greater elevation. This method of striking the ball is but little practised in England, and, consequently, the astonishment becomes the greater when

seen for the first time in France. The canons represented in Plate 142, are accomplished by holding the cue perpendicularly, and the object of thus playing appears to be that the red ball, and that of the opponent may be carried near to each other ; for when the balls can be got together in either corner of the table, there seems to be no limit to the succession of scores. However wonderful and astounding the execution may appear, it is evident that the mind—which sees and plans—of this great man is equally potent, for the nicety and the peculiarity of the execution of the stroke is at all times subservient to the break which is to follow. If canons effected in the extraordinary manner described ; if the object, by such means obtained, presents the contemplated result in its most perfect form, constitute excellence of the highest order, beholders, conversant with the beauties attendant upon the greatest nicety of play, cannot fail of acknowledging that the game of M. Berger possesses everything that genius or art can furnish to satisfy and astonish the human mind.

PRACTICE.

Devote your leisure hours to practice.—“Time is a grateful friend : use it well, and it never fails in making a suitable return.”

“ An Oxford Doctor once, ’tis said,
While skating on his back was laid.

“ How now, good Doctor,” one exclaimed,

“ I thought in skating you were famed !”

“ Yes, Sir,—I know the theory well ;
For want of practice ’twas I fell.”

Kind reader, does the Doctor’s case

Relax the muscles of thy face ?

The answer may belong to all,

For life, like skating, has its fall ;

In theory, we, like him, are wise,

But excellence in practice lies.”

“ Perseverance is often not only a substitute for ability but it is something more. Many a one of enduring capacity has, by dint of perseverance, accomplished wonderfully greater things than another possessing superior abilities. Let mind, asserting its superiority, induce you to remove the impediments, to rush on to the accomplishment. Let not the barrier of the impossible rise before you. What others have performed

you may do. Yield not to difficulties. Gird up your loins and conquer. Perseverance is a God-like virtue ; it renders a man valuable to himself, to society, to the world. Like nature, we must take time to strengthen ourselves and to develop all our resources. Hence we get the lesson of perseverance. What a mighty power lies latent in the mind of man ! Fail once, twice, and again, you will grow stronger with the failure. Effort rewards itself by increasing strength. This is a singular property of mind. By use the intellectual faculties acquire unimagined force.” Let the reader rely on this fact and take courage. Let him also bear in mind, “that knowledge can be attained only by personal exertion. The wisest instructor, the best written book, can only point out the gates and doors which lead to the fields of knowledge. Every one must traverse the hills and valleys for himself, and it is only by unremitting application and perseverance that the attempt will be crowned with success.”

The following remarks from a General Officer—lately of Her Majesty’s Service—supposed to have been the best amateur player of his day—prove the power and value of a defensive game. “I was in the habit of playing with the two Bedfords, both celebrated players ; the best of the two I could frequently defeat, but against the other I was never successful. The one

possessed of the greatest execution and considered the superior player, gave me, by playing an open game, many chances; but against the game of the other—shut up as close as an oyster—I could make no head, and my best exertions were always fruitless." Thus defeated he had, on one occasion, recourse to stratagem. "I have played you, Mr. Bedford, many matches but never with success. I will now attempt another, one of a ludicrous description. We will each have an eye bandaged up and play a series of games." Mr. Bedford went on tolerably well for the first hour, but after that period the strain upon the eye left open began to affect it; his hazard striking became impaired, and towards the close of the match he could scarcely judge a ball. To the astonishment of Mr. Bedford the hazard striking of the General remained as good as when he commenced. Expressing his surprise the General informed him that he had been for several years blind in the eye that was tied up!

In playing the "spot stroke," it is essential that the played-with ball should take a position within five or six inches of the red ball when re-spotted; thus situated the succeeding hazard will be seldom missed. Should the ball, however, be permitted to travel much beyond that distance, the accomplishment of the hazard, upon a table with small pockets, becomes uncertain. To

ensure, therefore, a position so desirable, it will be occasionally, necessary to drop the red ball for the pocket with a strength that will only just enable it to reach it, but in so doing it frequently occurs that the red ball, swerving against the cushion, will rest upon the edge of the pocket instead of dropping in. Casualties of such a nature, have occurred to myself scores of times, causing the loss of many games. Directing the attention of Mr. Kentfield to the repeated occurrence, he, one day, informed me that it was the opinion of a superior maker of Billiard Tables that all beds formed of slate had a tendency to throw off from every pocket, and added, "from the minutest observation, and after many trials, I am convinced that slate beds draw towards the centre of the table."—To such a statement I cannot subscribe, but if the assertion be just and well founded, my previous recommendation of metal beds is worthy of consideration, as the gentle "taps" which players of good strengths are obliged to adopt in keeping the balls together, render correctness of ball and truth of table quite imperative; there are players, nevertheless, devoting half their hours to the game without discovering the fault of either. An amateur of great excellence strolled, a few days since, into a Billiard Room in London much frequented by superior players, and, after knocking the balls about for a short time, discovered they were not of equal weight. Pointing out the circumstance to the proprietor of the establishment,

he appeared surprised that such an objection should be raised, observing, "It cannot surely, Sir, make much difference in the game." My informant, full of pity for the man's ignorance, left the place in disgust.

A Professional Player of eminence dilating upon the merits of a game he had recently played with an amateur of great power, expressed surprise at my not being present. The fact is, I remarked, when you are contending with that gentleman I am inclined to imagine that you give, occasionally, a friendly "pull" to afford him the opportunity of approaching you; and there being, to my mind, no beauty in the game unconnected with long runs from exquisite strengths, I seem to have no desire to witness a performance of any other description. He replied, "You are quite right, Sir, it is certainly the only part of the game worth looking at." The doctrine, therefore, inculcated by myself with reference to good strengths, thus receives, from the lips of a great authority, the homage that is its due. Independently of the beauties arising from the balls being placed, time after time, in situations that offer, even to indifferent players, a certain score, the advantages derived from such a system of play are most important, for as each succeeding hazard, by the adoption of good strengths, presents a simple score, the anxiety attendant upon strokes of difficulty is avoided,

and the nervous system left, consequently, unruffled. To what extent players may suffer under that influence has been already shewn, and those observations are even materially strengthened by the following anecdote. A gentleman playing a few months since at a celebrated watering place became, during the progress of the game, nervously excited ; and on one occasion, when about to play, approached, for that purpose, the ball of his opponent. The marker, observing the mistake, called his attention to the circumstance. Removing the cue from his bridge, instead of proceeding to his own ball, he moved hurriedly towards the red, took it from the table and placed it in the pocket of his coat !

In this volume are displayed a variety of canons, by which the balls are left together ; and from balls thus placed the game of 24 up ought to be won. The red ball is also placed in situations from which a losing hazard may be made, and the object ball carried to the vicinity of a centre pocket. From the red ball, thus situated, eight hazards should be accomplished, and the game won. From that which is termed the “ spot stroke,” the game of 24 up should be completed. Practise the strokes thus laid down until they can be effected. Never despair. To the desponding I would give courage. I would warn them against yielding to

the appearance of difficulties. What says the nursery rhyme?

“Gently touch a stinging nettle
And it stings you for your pains,
Grasp it like a man of mettle,
Soft as silk it still remains.”

“Patience and perseverance would be unnecessary were life exempt from trial. Although dismayed, be not discouraged; bend before the blast, but rise with increased energy. Nil Desperandum must be your watchword, although its sound should appear like mockery. The men most honoured by posterity were those to whom the word despair was unknown, and when warlike hosts menaced the annihilation of Greece, never despair was the cry of Leonidas.” If difficulties present themselves let them be surmounted, and when you have overcome them then impart your instruction to others, for science is never more important than when applied to the benefit and happiness of mankind.

Many persons abandon the game of Billiards, imagining that nature has not endowed them with genius, but success is not owing so much to genius as to application. Yes, in reality, application is the great secret of success. The “spot stroke,” so formidable in the hands of Mr. Roberts, and to which he is so much indebted, has been practised day after day, for

five hours at a stretch! If inquiry be made of those who have become proficient, they will tell you that perseverance and application accomplished the result. With practice new discoveries are made, for the mind of man is eminently progressive, expanding by use until maturity is reached. The scientific properties and the beauties with which the game abounds, have thus been brought to light, and for their development we are solely indebted to those who have devoted hour after hour to private practice. The game with the generality of players is simply the quickened motion of three balls over a flat surface of green cloth, and the faster they can be made to travel the greater the delight. To such players hazards, although frequently presented, are frequently missed. They appear difficult, and, consequently, the dread of missing operating on the mind, renders the correct delivery of the cue uncertain. Were such hazards placed and replaced when the player is alone, and practised daily, he would find them, after devoting a short time to the task, comparatively easy. Amongst other letters tendering thanks for the improvement derived from practising the breaks laid down in this book, is one from an officer in India. He says, "By the stroke at Plate 46, which simple as I now find it to be, I should previously have considered impossible, I have repeatedly won games which I had considered lost; whilst that represented at Plate 28 has frequently proved of signal service to me." The object, however, of his

letter was to request further information respecting the term "pressed," as some strokes thus described were beyond his power of execution. Whilst others, therefore, will not devote even a single hour to effect the removal of a difficulty, this lover of the game seeks information, although thousands of miles separate him from the source whence it is to be derived.

To one incapable of placing the balls in situations that lead to a succession of hazards or canons, the game of Billiards must be insipid and uninteresting ; but as practical knowledge is instilled into the mind, a change is wrought. The game becomes arrayed in beauty. Still, many a young aspirant pursuing the path of knowledge, encounters so many fancied difficulties, and sees so much to be accomplished, that he is content to forego the delight which practice and perseverance would be sure to bestow ; in fact, "like some wayworn traveller, who stands with folded arms gazing upon the towering ice-capped summits of the Alps, as mountain piled on mountain rises before his gaze, prefers remaining in the vale beneath, rather than attempt the difficult ascent." But to those properly instructed and delivering the cue correctly, arduous labour would scarcely be presented, and were such players to devote a few hours to private practice under the able tuition of Mr. John Pook, or in fact of any one capable of teaching the

correct method of playing a break, imaginary difficulties would disappear, and the simplicity of the game reign triumphant.

It is of course essential in all strokes that the object ball should be struck on the precise part necessary for obtaining the required result ; but as most players when under the necessity of applying an extra quantity of side-stroke, look at their own ball last, the exact portion of the ball played upon is frequently missed, and the ball, consequently, is struck either too full or too finely. No player can strike the object ball to a nicety who removes his eye from it when in the act of striking. The art, therefore, must be acquired of delivering the point of the cue to the side of the played-with ball, whilst the eye rests attentively upon the one upon which you are about to play. Without such acquirement constant failures will ensue.

Diagrams have been exhibited in other works where the ball has been divided into two and thirty parts, and the pupil directed to believe that each part has a distinct and important operation. Instruction so complicated bewilders and dismayed. Plates shewing extraordinary strokes, accompanied by directions with reference to required force have also appeared ; but such advice is

worthless, since the strength that would prove successful upon one table would fail upon another, few modern cushions possessing *equal* power. In shape, likewise, a difference exists ; some are cut very much under, whilst others are left more round, and the angle from cushions so formed would of course vary. It is the *variation* existing in cushions of India-rubber that renders my advice with reference to gentle strength of so much importance, for whilst the variation would be scarcely perceptible when the ball is gently struck, its effect and defect from the application of force, would be quite astounding. If players directed their attention to the course of the balls rebounding from fast India-rubber cushions when force was applied, the falseness of the angle would be sufficient to deter them from a strong delivery of the cue. Besides, independently of the falseness of angle which extreme strength is sure to produce, the application of force renders a player entirely dependent upon fineness of hazard striking, as no one, using force, can point out, from a fast India-rubber cushion, the precise spot upon which the balls will settle ; whereas the player of gentle strength will not only calculate the distance to a nicety, but, even place the balls where he wishes them to remain. In a small work lately published in America, diagrams are exhibited shewing strokes of an out of the way character ; but their execution, fortunately, has nothing to do with the noble game. Gentlemen, forsaking science,

desirous of seeing the balls "Jump Jim Crow," need not consult an American work, as the book published some years since by Mingaud abounds with strokes of eccentricity and folly. My object is, however, to remove such clap-trap nonsense from the mind; to divest the game of the incongruities by which it has been hitherto surrounded; to present it to the world in its graceful simplicity of form; to make apparent how easy is its acquirement, and to convince all that a little instruction, with daily practice, will overcome every difficulty.

A person who had received various lessons connected with the making of canons from several cushions, without perceiving any advancement, procured the second Edition of this treatise, and devoted a few hours daily to practising the breaks there laid down; and he assured me that in six months he had made his game twenty points in an hundred better than when he commenced. He fagged at the breaks and acquired the method of playing so as to leave another score. Go ye, desirous of improvement and do the like. Billiards cannot be acquired by inspiration.

Some players, taking but a superficial view of the diagrams, have pronounced this work a "fearful study," whereas the sole object of putting it in print was to make manifest its extreme simplicity, and to convince

even moderate hazard-strikers that good strengths obtained by practice, and a judicious use of the side stroke would enable them to accomplish all that is required. In Plate 10, the action of the played-with ball and the control over it is shewn. In Plate 11, the side-stroke is clearly defined. The art of disturbing a ball when placed in the baulk is demonstrated. Every description of canon is made apparent; and those leading to the keeping of the balls together, producing long runs, are in great variety. Popular breaks are given and the correct method of playing them is described. Hazards are placed from which a score can be made, and the object ball taken to a position that ought to complete the game of 24 up. Can anything be more simple? Were proofs required to establish the fact, many might be produced, but to record one will be sufficient. A young man, the conductor of a Billiard Room in a large and fashionable town, with great aptitude for hazard striking, possessed but a limited knowledge of the game. With a bridge imperfect and a cue too heavy and much too long, the goodness even of his hazard striking was made uncertain. Correcting the one and shortening the other, I commenced with him a sort of daily task; and during the progress of the games I called his attention to the best method of playing each break, and marked upon the table the positions the balls ought to occupy for the succeeding stroke. Always partial to the game, and then quite enchanted with its simplicity

and beauties, he devoted his leisure hours to practice, placing the balls in favourable positions and playing the break until he could perform it properly. By the adoption of gentle strengths he acquired the art of leaving simple hazards, and then the previous correctness of his hazard striking made him formidable indeed, as scarcely a score was missed. Thus, instead of making as before, only eight or ten points from a promising break, he completed with apparent ease, scores of twenty or thirty; in fact, the difference in his game was so remarkable, that players who a month previously had run him closely, could now scarcely approach him with a fourth of the game bestowed !

“ Let this be so, and doubt not but success
 Will fashion the event in better shape,
 Than I can lay it down in likelihood.”

It does not follow that the angles marked in diagrams will exactly correspond with those presented from ordinary tables, as cushions stuffed with India-rubber will always vary. If the India-rubber has nothing over it but the ticking in which it is confined, and the green cloth of the table, the elasticity will be too great to admit of a correct angle, if any degree of force be applied; and such cushions are never correct when the ball rebounds from the second cushion. Truth of angle, to the truly scientific player, is everything, and if he is under the necessity of making allowance for abruptness

of angle, the simplicity of the game, obtainable by truth of angle, is completely destroyed, and knowledge, consequently, rendered useless. Let not, therefore, the bad taste of the inexperienced lead you astray in favour of fast running tables, since speed and truth cannot be combined. All cushions padded with India-rubber are more or less untrue, and those that are not in some degree deadened by having a layer of list or flannel between the cloth and the ticking are quite unfit to play upon. A proprietor of billiard rooms, perceiving that the youthful players were advocates for speed, sought by various contrivances to render his tables the fastest of any, and to entice, by such means, the majority of players to his rooms. He is not the first man that has "sinned against the light," and adorned with encomium that which his judgment would condemn ; neither will he be the last that has reaped advantages from pandering to the taste of the ignorant, the silly, and the vain. The falseness of the cushions, and the constant repetition of chance hazards—always attendant upon unnecessary and unreasonable speed—was to me so intolerable that I ceased for a time to become even a spectator. As a player I had renounced his table for years. Let me again observe that "speed and truth cannot be combined," and be assured that without correctness of angle, the game of Billiards is a farce.

MR. ROBERTS AND MR. KENTFIELD.

That the persons above named are the finest players of the English game of Billiards, there cannot be, I believe, a question; and being so considered it is to be regretted that the desire of seeing them contend cannot be gratified. There exists on the part of Mr. Roberts but one feeling; that of wishing to prove which is really the better man. A select few, principally residents and frequenters of Brighton, adhere tenaciously to Kentfield, and upon the scientific properties of his game would pin their faith and invest their money. The friends, however, of Mr. Roberts are far more numerous, and every hundred pounds produced on behalf of Kentfield would be met by the supporters of Roberts with as many thousands. The contemplated match engrossing the thoughts and opinions of the billiard players of England, the following particulars may be considered interesting and worthy of perusal. Arriving in Brighton a few years since, Mr. Roberts called on Kentfield. He informed him at once, in a manly straightforward manner, who he was, and expressed a desire of playing a friendly game. He neither sought disguise nor secresy, and would willingly have shewn the strength of his game to all who might have approached. A nobleness of conduct similar to this was not, unfortunately, in unison with the feelings of Mr.

Kentfield. Publicity he sought to avoid. Taking Roberts into a room adjoining, he locked the door, and thus shut up, commenced a game. Ere many strokes had been played Mr. Roberts had sufficient penetration to perceive that Kentfield was not exerting himself ; that he was in fact merely trifling with him, and he thus addressed him, "This, Mr. Kentfield, cannot be your game ; to play such as this I can give forty in a hundred. If you are withholding your powers for the purpose of obtaining a bet, I am willing to recommence the game and to play you for five pounds." That being declined, Mr. Roberts laid down his cue. Had Mr. Kentfield paid a visit to Manchester, his reception would have been widely different ; from Mr. Roberts and his friends he would have received the greatest attention. Some months after this occurrence a friend of Roberts, anxious for the match, waited upon Mr. Kentfield. He said, " Myself and friends in Manchester are desirous of making a match between yourself and Roberts, and to the terms I shall propose, you cannot raise, I think, the slightest objection. If you are desirous of playing for a large stake, I am now prepared to deposit a thousand pounds ; if money is not your object he shall play you a friendly game, and the money taken at the door for admission shall be divided between you ; or should you prefer it, the money so taken shall be distributed in equal parts between the charitable institutions of Manchester

and Brighton." The whole of these proposals were declined, but

"I never in my life
Did hear a challenge urged more modestly,
Unless a brother should a brother dare
To gentle exercise and proof of arms."

Standing as Mr. Kentfield did, champion of the Billiard world, it must appear strange that he should allow himself to be thus bearded, and thus, in fact, removed from the pedestal or throne upon which public opinion had placed him ; but I must do Mr. Kentfield the justice to admit that the reasons he assigned to myself for not playing a match with Mr. Roberts were forcible, convincing, and most sensible. Since, however, these really wonderful men cannot be brought together within the lists, we must endeavour to fight the battle in imagination, and award the victory by analogy.

The professional avocations of Mr. Kentfield have been almost entirely confined to one locality, and to tables differing from those in general use, and although his success upon tables so constructed has been most formidable, he has been nevertheless frequently defeated at less points by the same antagonists when contending upon other ground. Mr. Roberts, favoured for a time with a roving commission, met opponents far more formidable upon every tack, and was not only victorious upon neutral shores, but defeated them within the precincts of their own ports, and when surrounded by

cheering and admiring friends. In this instance analogy appears to give to Mr. Roberts an advantage.

Strolling one afternoon into the Billiard room in Manchester Street, I found Mr. Kentfield playing with one who was a stranger to me. The game was 100 up, and when I entered the room the score stood thus, Mr. Kentfield 45, his opponent 11. The latter converting, by a masterly stroke, a winning into a losing hazard, obtained a promising break; and he worked it as well as any one could be expected to do upon a table that was strange to him. Well, this game, in which Mr. Kentfield was 45 to 11, the stranger won! My curiosity was of course excited, and I inquired his name. It was Mr. Green. To this Mr. Green, defeating Kentfield when the game was fully 3 to 1 against him, I afterwards saw Mr. Roberts give 20 in a hundred, and defeat him easily. Here again analogy is in favour of Roberts.

A gentleman from Manchester, perfectly acquainted with the powers of Mr. Roberts, played a series of games with Kentfield. The game was fifty up, and twenty points were given, and although the speed of the table and the power of the cushions were entirely unknown, the opponent of Mr. Kentfield was only beaten by the odd game. The same gentleman, upon a table with which he is thoroughly acquainted, dares not oppose Mr. Roberts with an addition of five points. This likewise appears to give to Mr. Roberts an ascendancy.

Placing the balls in situations extremely promising—

see Plate 55—I informed Roberts that I had frequently offered to bet Kentfield a sovereign that he did not make, from balls so placed, four and twenty points. Roberts at once played the break and scored forty; and this, too, upon a table on which the pockets were rather more shut up than those upon the table of Mr. Kentfield. I placed balls also that represented a favourite and a favourable canon. From balls so situated Mr. Kentfield took a bet of 2 to 1 that he scored one and thirty points. He failed, and did not accomplish the task in seven or eight attempts. From balls similarly situated, Mr. Roberts scored two and thirty points the first time of trial. Hence again the star of the west eclipses that of the south.

On another occasion I saw Mr. Kentfield contending with an amateur. The game was the “Go back game;” Mr. Kentfield undertaking to score sixty points whilst his opponent scored but thirty-five. I watched the game attentively for a couple of hours, and during that period Mr. Kentfield did not score thirty points off the balls. Had Mr. Roberts played the same game he would have completed, I have no doubt, a score of thirty or forty points, thirty or forty times. Only yesterday, April the 21st, Mr. Kentfield played a match of 500 up with a noble lord of some celebrity, giving at the rate of 12 points in 50. I may safely say, I think, in the words of the immortal bard, that it was “a sorry sight;” worse play on the part of Mr. Kentfield was

never beheld. His noble opponent, throughout the match, appeared the better player; making greater runs from the balls. To that nobleman Mr. Roberts would have given, in a similar match, at least 200 points. In defiance of repeated exhibitions—when anxiety prevailed—similar to the one now described, there are men still weak enough to imagine that in a match with Mr. Roberts Mr. Kentfield would hold his own; but the unprejudiced reader, forming a judgment from parities of play now given, must entertain a different opinion. What Mr. Kentfield might have done twenty years since, upon tables constructed as they now are, is beyond my power to declare; I merely, as a faithful chronicler, take upon myself to state what he would be now if opposed to a professional player so distinguished as Mr. Roberts. In the cramp game of “one pocket to five”—where the pocket closed against his adversary is constantly presenting a rock upon which he is almost sure to split, cramping, consequently, his exertions—Mr. Kentfield, full of confidence, feels himself at home, and it is then that canons of surpassing excellence, strengths marvellously accurate, knowledge and judgment in advance of general conception, are made most manifest, rendering the exhibition one of great beauty and of exquisite delight.

The man breathes not that is a greater admirer of the prowess of Mr. Kentfield than I was once; in fact, he was styled the “God of my idolatry,” and certainly, at that

period, I never expected to have seen any one approach his excellence ; but each succeeding year appears to produce not only fresh matter for amazement, but men capable of completing the surprise. From such a class has Mr. Roberts sprung ; and the genius bountifully bestowed by Providence has been cultivated by reflection and rendered perfect by daily and hourly practice. He possesses a brilliancy of execution not yet equalled. A knowledge of the useful and sterling properties of the game far beyond what most players imagine. Nerves that disasters cannot shake, and a courage that difficulties cannot dismay. Thus constituted, and with capabilities so great, who dares oppose him ?

To honour him let hosts their voices raise ;
 Envy be dumb, while Genius sings his praise :
 Around his brow I twine this wreath of fame,
 And on the winds send forth the Champion's name.

As the proposal for the match, the merits of which have been now discussed, emanated at a period when Mr. Kentfield was advancing in years, I was of course called upon to give an opinion with reference to the capabilities of each party as they then appeared ; and my judgment, consequently, has been formed from the games lately played. What Mr. Kentfield was capable of doing in his palmy days of youthful vigour, upon tables with large pockets, has been fully and faithfully described in the earlier pages of this volume, and every

justice has been done to the extraordinary powers he then displayed. The diagram (Plate 139) in which the commonest losing-hazard was four times missed, and the comments connected with the game then in course of progress, would not have been thus publicly noticed had they not offered the clearest and unanswerable testimony to the assertions I had previously made with reference to the consequences attending a want of nerve; and with proofs so decided how could I resist their application? neither should I have felt justified in giving an opinion connected with the result of a match between these really wonderful men, had I not produced an evidence that enabled every reader to form a judgment. The constant playing of the cramp game of "One pocket to five," weakening, probably, in some degree, the hazard striking of Mr. Kentfield, may have rendered the common and general game less powerful; probably too—although he strenuously denies it—he is past the age when the eye is quickest to perceive and the hand surest to execute; under such circumstances I should feel deeply grieved were it for one moment supposed that I had pressed hardly upon him for the failure of his powers, however his reluctance to acknowledge this fact may wound my sense of justice. His head may be as clear to plan, his arm as ready to perform, but his heart, most assuredly, cannot sustain. While the scientific player, therefore, from the facts adduced, will know and doubtlessly acknowledge

the present superiority of Roberts, I will leave it to the small circle who still adhere to Kentfield as the Champion of England, to make their last "Losing Hazard" in the blissful confidence that their favourite could have won the match had he been induced to try.

TO BEGINNERS DESIROUS OF LEARNING THE
GAME.

The best method of learning the game of Billiards is to knock the balls about until a freedom of arm has been obtained. For hazards, begin with the "winning," taking care to strike the played-with ball in the centre, and the object ball on that part diametrically opposite to the pocket. Canons and losing hazards will afterwards be easy. To arrive at any degree of excellence, the art of hitting the ball upon its side must be acquired. To perform that, is, at the commencement, somewhat difficult, and requires care, patience, and perseverance. Ere the attempt be made, acquire a perfect command over the ball struck. Make it to follow, recoil, or remain stationary: learn, in short, to place it in a position that will offer the advantages of another score. When thus advanced in execution, apply diligently to the use of the side stroke; and, when fully capable of hitting the played-with ball upon its side, discover, by practice, the *extent* of power that can be imparted to it: that ascertained, subdue and regulate its application to the various purposes required. The remarks under the title of "The Side Stroke" (Plate 11) will show, most forcibly, its ramifications and importance; but language cannot depict in adequate terms the beauty, precision and utility of its applica-

tion when exhibited by Mr. Kentfield, and players who have not had an opportunity of witnessing its extraordinary effect can have but a remote conception of its influence over every part of the game.

THE POSITION OF THE PLAYER.

The player should stand firmly on the right leg ; the left advanced and a little bent—the body, standing well back from the Table, inclining in the same direction as the left leg. It has been stated, in a work published some time since, that the cue should be delivered with a jerk. Advice more dangerous could scarcely be given. The cue, when placed upon the bridge, should be held horizontally, and it should pass through the groove formed for its reception as straight and as smoothly as possible. Place the point of the cue to the ball, and draw it back about four inches ; and be sure, in the delivery, that the ball be struck on the precise spot at which aim was taken.

THE FORMATION OF THE BRIDGE.

In forming the bridge, the wrist and only the tops of the fingers should rest upon the Table : the hand must be raised, forming a hollow in the palm. Most players

press the thumb closely against the forefinger; but a bridge thus formed is contracted and imperfect. The thumb, well raised, should be separated from the forefinger by half an inch. The groove for the cue to travel through will, by this arrangement, be much more open; and the thumb can, by such a mode, be lowered, should it be necessary to strike the ball much below the centre.

TEMPER.

The speed of a modern Table leads to many chance hazards; but, however great the annoyance, it should be patiently submitted to, for it frequently occurs that a score from luck is either followed by a bad stroke or by one evincing want of caution; and the goodness of the break then left may more than compensate for the points previously obtained. If, however, the temper be suffered to be ruffled by accidental hazards, a proper advantage cannot be taken of the balls when thus presented in a favourable position. Some years since, large sums being staked, a gentleman at Bath, known by the appellation of "The Commodore," was, in one match, a winner of five hundred pounds, and it was arranged that one more game should be played for the whole amount. Previously to its commencement, the loser gave the winner the option of either receiving at

once the thousand pounds or of having an annuity for life. The latter was selected. The game played was "The White game," 12 up; and the parties both reached eleven. The opponent of the Commodore had to play, and his ball was stuck fast against the cushion. Any odds on the Commodore. The player struck, and missed, the game appeared over; but the ball, on returning from the top cushion, not only hit his adversary's ball, but actually holed it in the centre pocket!

PRUDENCE.

Play gently, coolly, discreetly ; and accustom yourself to play in public. The presence of a large assembly will frequently affect the finest player ; and he that indulges most in a florid style of game will, in all probability, be the greatest sufferer. The nervous system, as before observed, regulates the senses—the senses influence the mind. Should, therefore, a nervous trepidation seize the player, his judgment, as well as execution, will forsake him. Many years since, two gentlemen, entertaining different opinions respecting the games of Mr. Bedford and Mr. Kentfield, agreed that a match should be played by them ; and upon that occasion, when each party was most desirous of excelling, the performance was vastly inferior to their general play. At a period much later, a gentleman was play-

ing for the trifling sum of half a crown ; and the match had so evenly continued that the games of the respective parties had reached 20 to 19. The player that was then but one game behind commenced backing himself for five pounds, and the additional sum had so great an effect upon his nerves that he could not win another game, and as he was rash enough still to increase the stake, he found himself, on concluding, a loser of five hundred pounds !

Within the last few months, in a Subscription Room occasionally frequented, I commenced playing with an acquaintance. I did so merely for the purpose of keeping the Table going, and for the respect I bear the noble game. I gave six points in 24, and imagined I had rather the worst of it : at the close of the play I was, nevertheless, several games a head. On the following day we again contested at the same points ; and still I left off a winner. I then observed, "The next time we play I will give you seven ; and, if I be successful at those points, you shall receive eight, and after that, if necessary, nine." Being many games in advance, and caring but little about the result, I was induced to play a rattling open game, quite at variance with discretion ; but it so happened that, hit the balls as I might, into the pockets they would go ; and the luck was certainly enough to have provoked a saint. My opponent, a gentleman of a most even disposition,

and accustomed to play for a stake far beyond the actual one for which he was then contending, could not bear up against the decided run that appeared to be against him ; and his nerves, yielding, as it were, to fate, at length gave way, and, under such a feeling, he was actually beaten as many as sixteen following games, receiving eight points ! In winning-hazard striking he was greatly superior to myself, and could perform, by means of a slow twist, a losing hazard (taught by Mr. Pratt) that would have puzzled a much superior player. Although advantages of this nature led him, doubtlessly, to imagine that I could not beat him at the points, he had nevertheless the good sense not to increase his stake. Had he done so, he would, in all probability, have been a considerable loser. Many persons, tenacious of commencing a match for even a sovereign a game, will greatly advance upon that sum after losing a few games ; and an over-anxious desire to regain the lost money will even stimulate them to a further increase. This is what billiard-players term being “pricked ;” but, as a feeling of that description is produced by unnatural excitement and want of judgment, it should be studiously avoided by young players. There have already been sufferers enough from its baneful influence.

THE GAME OF "24 UP" RECOMMENDED.

If Billiards be resorted to merely for the occupation of an idle hour, it is unimportant what game be played; but if the player be desirous of becoming a successful and finished performer, he had better confine himself to the legitimate game of 24 up, and he should invariably play for a stake sufficient to attract his utmost care and attention. The game of 50 or 100 up produces generally a desire of showing off—begetting a passion for display, leading to an elaborate style, at variance with discretion. Such players become easy victims to those who adopt a proper degree of caution, and who are satisfied with shorter runs from the balls. Of the truth of this doctrine I have lately had the strictest proof in a gentleman who possessed in his game nothing to boast of beyond the capability of making a canon or hazard when presented in the simplest form, yet who, combining with it judgment, caution and defence, succeeded in giving one-third of the game to a player of greater freedom of cue than himself; and who, by means of the side twist, could actually execute a stroke of which the giver of the points had not even the slightest conception.

THE INDISCRIMINATE USE OF THE SIDE STROKE
EXPOSED.

A gentleman visiting Brighton played daily at the Tables in Broad Street. His opponent, one of the florid school of players, had but little chance. After playing a few days, and always with success, he devoted some hours to receiving instruction in the art of making side-stroke canons from several cushions; and in his later matches with the same party he endeavoured to bring them into use. Failing in every attempt, instead of leaving off a winner as previously, he actually won but one game in nearly a dozen! Knowledge, however, of the side stroke is, nevertheless, absolutely necessary, and when exercised with judgment, will be found a powerful agent; but its indiscriminate use will invariably lead to results similar to that now recorded.

PLAYING WITH THE REST, OR BRIDGE.

Do not, when playing with the rest, place it too near the ball. Should the stroke require the ball to be struck below the centre, the instrument, thus placed, will prevent your seeing the precise spot. If a space of about ten or twelve inches be left between the ball and the rest, the cue can be kept in a position nearly

horizontal; but if the bridge be much nearer the cue will be elevated at the butt, and the point so much depressed that the correct striking of the ball will, in all probability, be prevented. Remarks somewhat similar have reference also to the playing with the half or long cue, when the butt is used. The generality of players raise the hand too high, and by that means give a slanting direction to the cue, unnecessary and improper; by lowering the hand, and allowing more of the butt to rest upon the Table, the correctness of its application will be facilitated.

GIVING A MISS.

There are few of the niceties of the game that require more care than that of "giving a miss," and particularly when the player wishes to mask the ball. I recollect a game I played with Mr. Burke of Cheltenham. He went off, and doubled, as was his custom, the red ball nearly over the baulk corner pocket. Not feeling disposed, against so skilful an antagonist, to run the risk of playing for a canon off his ball, I gave a miss, thinking I had masked the ball. His eye, keen and penetrating, discovered at a glance that I had just left him room to pass. He played at the red ball, and holed his own ball off it by a fine cut, and scored forty points from the break. Had I taken the required

pains, and had really masked the ball, the game would in all probability, have been in my favour ; but as it was, I lost, through carelessness, the only chance I possessed. In giving a miss, the player should accustom himself to do so with the point of the cue ; and if the butt was altogether prohibited for such a purpose the game would be much improved and disputes avoided.

In giving a miss, the ball should never be placed close to a cushion, as the adversary, taking advantage of the crippled situation, can play for a score that he would not, under other circumstances, have attempted ; and should he fail, one cannot, from such a position, take advantage, with certainty, of anything he may have left. A space of six inches should lie between the ball and the cushion ; for, if a canon is attempted by the opponent, there will be left to him plenty of room to go round it.

If accustomed to give a miss at starting, it must be done from the side cushion, taking care to bring the ball into the circle. Thus situated, should the opponent give another, the player will be in the best position to take advantage of it. If the miss be given on the baulk side of the centre pocket, and not more than six inches from it, it is good play to double the ball for the

opposite pocket, and to canon from the top cushion, through the medium of a strong side twist. If the miss be given six inches above the centre pocket, and rather close to the cushion, one may play for a canon off the red ball ; and although the situation of the player's ball may be a little out of the angle, the counter side stroke will enable him to reach it.

Great judgment is required in giving a miss. Although a canon had been made three or four times in succession, I once saw a player persist in giving a miss precisely in the same spot. When the miss given has been proved to be unsafe, some other situation should be selected. The difficult canon described in Plate 144, was so repeatedly made by a Noble Marquis that I was under the necessity of changing my tactics, and was obliged, in seeking safety through the medium of a miss, to look for succour in some other part of the Table.

Never strike the balls wantonly, nor without a precise object. If they do not present a probable score, and appear to be against you, give a miss, or drop, or double your opponent's ball to a cushion, and await patiently for a favourable aspect.

If the ball of the antagonist be close to a cushion, and there is not any hazard presented from the red ball, the player should give a miss, placing his ball in a situation to command one. The opponent, obliged to play from a cramped position, will, in all probability, leave a good break. (See Plate 27.) I once heard a gentleman say that he had played at Billiards for twenty years, and had only just discovered the importance of giving a judicious miss.

GOOD STRENGTHS: ITS ADVANTAGES CONFIRMED.

Two gentlemen were matched at a Subscription Table in Lancashire. One played in a brilliant, florid style—the other in a manner subdued and gentle, trusting wholly to correctness of strengths. The former, to a superficial observer, would appear the superior, which opinion was entertained by the player himself. After repeated defeats, being still unsatisfied, he frequently exclaimed—"How does he do it? How, with his limited execution, does he contrive to beat me?" The exclamation might have been answered thus: the fact is, your style of game is so elaborate that you are induced to attempt things where the probabilities are against you, and, in missing them, you leave your game exposed; whilst your adversary, not going beyond his depth, and always regulating his stroke by a strength combining safety, plays to a great advantage. You,

despising the defensive security sought by him, are again and again led to the repetition of errors; and your frequent failures yield to him those chances which his system of play never bestows upon you. The florid style is amusing, but not healthy: it pleases the imagination, but dissatisfies the judgment.

Many reasons could be advanced in proof of the assertion that a knowledge of the game, combined with correct strengths, is all that is required to constitute a successful and finished player; but very few will be sufficient for the purpose. In the first place, I have repeatedly offered an eminent professional—standing, as a scientific player, almost alone—two, and even three, to one against making a long winning hazard; whereas similar hazards can be made by an Officer in Her Majesty's service almost at pleasure: yet, as players of the general game there cannot be a comparison between them. Secondly, Mr. Howse possessed many years since, the finest execution, and at that period he could give to Mr. Kentfield four points in 24; at the present time Mr. Kentfield can give him double the number! The hazard striking of Mr. Kentfield remains the same—that of Mr. Howse none the worse. Whence arises, then, the vast improvement of the one over the stationary position of the other? *Knowledge of the game, combined*

with good strengths! Again, with respect to myself: my winning-hazard striking is so imperfect that it frequently occurs that during the course of a match, ranging, perhaps, over twenty or thirty games, I do not make one long winning hazard; and occasionally I play several games of 100 up without making a winning hazard at all. Yet, notwithstanding this deficiency, equal to more than one-third of the game, I have frequently given five or six points in 24 to gentlemen whose winning-hazard striking was greatly superior to mine. The losing hazards and canons, played with judicious strengths, always carried me through. I am acquainted, also, with a gentleman who makes a bad bridge, and much too long, missing, from this cause, various hazards that require force; but still the precision with which he makes his canons, and the good strengths with which he plays, render him a very formidable opponent, and very difficult to beat.

If the red ball be safe, and my opponent's ball be so placed as to offer me a losing hazard through the medium of a twist, I always, after the fashion of Mr. Burke, play for it with a *dead strength*, if it will carry the object ball to the situation required; for, should I miss holing my own ball, it will be left so completely over the pocket that there will not be made from it more than the solitary two, and, in compensa-

tion, the red ball being safe, I, in all probability, obtain a miss ; whereas, should I succeed in scoring as described, the break left may prove very advantageous.

A player, considered by many as second only to Mr. Kentfield, a few days since, gave rather more than a third of the game to a gentleman whose power of cue was held in some repute. The latter won. Upon expressing my surprise, the loser thus replied :—“The fact is, I play so seldom that I cannot judge the strengths.” Here, therefore, is an admission from almost the highest authority that judicious or well-regulated strengths constitute the *power* of the game. An acknowledgment of this kind, from so celebrated a player, is to me a flattering confirmation of the truth of all that I have said upon the subject. If good strengths, “the one thing needful,” are so essential to the game, they should be played with the greatest care and nicety of judgment ; and, in order that success may be insured, it is necessary that the speed of the bed of the table and the return from the cushion should be equal, and that they should, of course, continue so from day to day ; but I am informed by a marker of experience, intelligence, and close observation, that cushions stuffed with Indian-rubber are so susceptible of change of temperature that the effect of it has even been experienced during the continuation of a match !

Thus the best of strengths at eleven in the morning might prove the worst of strengths at five in the afternoon ! I played a few years since for several weeks with a gentleman with whom I was well acquainted. The “Go-Back Game” was selected. I had acquired, in the matches, the strength of the Table to so great a nicety that whenever I obtained a losing hazard in the centre pocket the game was considered over. My opponent, complaining of this, expressed his determination to renounce further attempts. The proprietor of the room, fearing his departure, thus addressed him : “Try once more, Sir ; I will endeavour to prevent it.” After the play for the day had ceased, he removed the lower cushion, and, placing it for the night before the kitchen fire, so softened it and so increased its speed and power that the strength which had previously only taken the object ball to the centre pocket carried it *into the baulk* ! I remember perfectly well frequently exclaiming—“Why, what ails the balls?” but many months had elapsed ere I was informed of the dirty trick that had been played.

PLAY THE GAME ACCORDING TO THE SCORE.

The style of game must be regulated according to the score. If in a state of forwardness, the play must be cautious, avoiding all attempts to make either a canon,

or a hazard, if the risk appears to be two to one against accomplishment. If the opponent's game, however, be much advanced, one will be justified in playing more boldly, taking, at the same time, especial care that each stroke is played with a strength that will insure another score. On this subject I cannot, perhaps, do better than cite the doggerel lines addressed by Mr. Hughes to the frequenters of his room :—

“ William Hughes hopes you'll him excuse
For making this observation :
When you've the best of the game, keep the same ;
To mention more there can be no occasion.”

THE POWER OF ATTRACTION.

There are sciences in which theory is in advance of the practice, and sciences in which practice has decidedly the start. Amongst the latter may be classed the game of Billiards ; for, although we perceive, here and there, players of limited execution formidable from their knowledge of the game, the majority depend solely upon hazard striking ; whilst some are altogether what naturalists would term “ acephalous.” An important particular connected with the game has escaped, I am inclined to think, the notice of even the finest players ; and that is, the advantages derived from the power of attraction. Attraction being inherent in nature, masses of matter are drawn towards each other ; and the power of attraction is, in fact, so great that

were it not for a counteracting principle of repulsion, all bodies would hasten into the closest contact. Canons consequently, should be brought prominently into use, and played for, if from the red ball, with gentle strength, since the power of attraction increases in proportion as bodies slowly approach. I was playing, a short time since, with a gentleman whose sight is peculiarly clear and powerful. A canon was attempted from a side cushion, and as the played-with ball approached the one near to which he was standing, he walked from it, imagining the ball would pass without touching. He had, however, scarcely moved three paces ere I exclaimed—"A canon!" and Mr. Bedford, marking the game, also announced it. Nevertheless, nothing could convince my opponent that the balls had touched, and laying down his cue in dudgeon, abruptly left the room. I believe the ball, approaching the other with a dead strength, was drawn from its course by the power of attraction.

POWER ; UNDER CONTROL.

There will be found in the Dockyard at Devonport a steam-engine that raises a hammer weighing two tons ten hundred weight, used for the purpose of falling heavily in manufacturing anchors. This extraordinary power is, nevertheless, under complete control, and can be so regulated and subdued that a small nail or brad,

placed upon a piece of wood, received as many as ten taps ere it was driven in. The power of the strong and sinewy player of the game of Billiards will admit of similar regulation ; and if the learner will renounce the anchor-making force, and substitute in its stead the gentle taps, he will find it greatly to his advantage.

As the side stroke cannot enlarge the pocket for a winning hazard, it will consequently be rendered much more difficult than a losing one ; but skill in that hazard being of great importance, I have been induced to insert a description of the Game of Pyramid. This game consists entirely of winning hazards ; and as the mass of balls, when struck, are, perhaps, widely scattered over the surface of the Table, it is requisite, in holeing a ball, that the hazard should be made with a peculiar nicety of strength, in order that many others should succeed ; and thus the game now about to be described will offer to a player, desirous of improvement, the very best of practice.

THE GAME OF PYRAMID.

This game can be played with any number of balls or players. The usual number of balls is sixteen—viz., fifteen coloured and one white; two persons generally play.

The game is scored by holeing the coloured balls: whoever has holed the greatest number of balls, at the end of the game, wins.

The player pocketing the last ball scores two.

String for the lead: the ball nearest to the baulk cushion has the choice. The fifteen coloured balls are placed in the form of a triangle, the first ball being on the winning spot.

The player commences from the circle in the baulk. He plays with the white ball at the coloured ones placed as above. Should the striker not pocket any of the coloured balls, the next player plays with the white ball, from the place it has stopped.

In pocketing one or more of the coloured balls, the player continues until he fails.

Should the player pocket his own ball, he must replace, on the winning spot, one of the coloured balls

he may have already holed. Should the spot be occupied by another ball, he must place it in a line behind the ball or balls so occupying the spot or line. Should the player not have a ball, he must place the first ball that he may pocket on the spot; or, if the game shall have been finished ere he shall have holed a ball to re-place, he must pay the winner one ball extra.

Missing the balls, the player must spot a ball.

Making a foul stroke, the player must spot a ball.

Foul strokes are made by touching any ball in playing (except the striker's) with the hand, cue, or otherwise, or by touching a ball whilst running. All balls holed by the foul stroke are re-placed, and the next in succession plays.

Should the player pocket his own ball, and, at the same time, hole one or more of the coloured balls, the balls so holed are re-placed; and one more is also re-placed, in consequence of the striker having holed his own.

All the players play with the same ball, except when there are only two remaining on the Table; in that case the last striker plays with the white and the other player with the coloured ball.

When only two balls are on the Table, should the player hole his own ball, he loses the two.

HANDICAP SWEEPSTAKES.

Three or more persons can play, and the game may extend to any number of points agreed upon. Draw lots for the order of starting. The red ball is spotted. No. 1 plays first; No. 2 follows; and the rest in rotation. The number of points made by the player, in each inning, are marked upon the slate; and when he has ceased to score the next player commences. If a miss be made, one point is taken from the player's score, and the others do not reap any further advantage. Should the player hole his ball, without striking another, he loses three points. When the balls touch there cannot be any score: they are broken, the red ball spotted, and the next in succession plays. Whatever the game may be, that person is the winner whose aggregate amount of the scores, made in the several innings, first completes the number specified. When there are several persons desirous of occupying the Table, they will find Sweepstakes very amusing; and, if inferior players receive an adequate number of points, each person can have a fair chance of winning. At Brighton, this method of amusing many persons at once is very popular; and it has frequently occurred that, in

Sweepstakes handicapped by Mr. Kentfield, four or five players have been, at the close, within one or two hazards of winning the game. It is also very attractive to spectators, and promotes a great deal of speculation and excitement.

GOLD CUE.

In the early part of last year several noblemen and gentlemen made a £10 Sweepstakes. The game was 250 up, and the winner to be entitled to a Gold Cue. In order, however, to give popularity to the game, and also a general stimulus, it was resolved that the Cue should pass into the possession of any other champion who had ability to win it. To accomplish this end, it was arranged that Sweepstakes should be annually played; and as the conditions connected with it may be interesting to amateurs I am induced to subjoin them :—

GOLD CUE, 1844.

“ The Annual Sweepstakes, 250 up, 10 Sovereigns “ each, will be played at Mr. Kentfield’s Rooms on

“ Tuesday, April 2nd, 1844. Any gentleman wishing
“ to play must declare his intention to Mr. Kentfield
“ one fortnight, or more, before the above day; and,
“ having so declared, will forfeit half his stake should
“ he not play.

“ The stakes to be paid to Mr. Kentfield before the
“ commencement of the Sweepstakes.

“ The winner will have the right of challenging the
“ present holder of the Gold Cue to play a match for
“ £25, either of twenty-five games of twenty-four
“ points each or of one game of 500, as he (the winner)
“ may choose.

“ If the winner of the Sweepstakes win also this
“ match, he shall receive the Cue from its present
“ holder, and retain it safe from challenge this year;
“ but open to the challenges of the next year and the
“ year after.

“ If the holder of the Cue win this match, the player
“ who was second in the Sweepstakes shall acquire the
“ right of challenging on the same terms; and if his
“ challenge be refused, or if he prove successful in the
“ match, the Cue must be resigned to him to be held
“ as above.

“ If the holder of the Cue refuse the challenge of the
“ winner of the Sweepstakes, the latter is then open to
“ the challenge, for this year, of the second in the
“ Sweepstakes to play the usual match, which match
“ will determine who shall be the holder of the Cue.

“ If the present holder of the Cue defend it on these
“ conditions, for this year and the next, the Cue shall
“ become his property.

“ If the Sweepstakes result in equal points for second
“ place, between two or more players, the tie to be
“ played off—if between two players, in a match of
“ fifteen games of twenty-four points each, for £10 ; if
“ between more than two players, in a Sweepstakes,
“ 100 up, £5 each player.

“ The above match must be played (as the players
“ may determine) either on Tuesday evening, after the
“ Sweepstakes, or on Wednesday morning, commencing
“ at ten o'clock, in order that it may not interfere with
“ the challenge matches which, if they take place, must
“ be played on Wednesday, April 3rd, and Thursday,
“ April 4th.

“ The annual Sweepstakes are appointed to take
“ place on the Tuesday before Easter Monday, and
“ the challenge matches on the two following days,
“ under the same conditions as above.”

As it was intended that the Cue should be considered as a trophy for the best amateur player, I think the game should be played as greyhounds are run, namely, two and two ; each winner of a game again contending until it is brought to the last couple, and the victor of that struggle to be the possessor of the prize. By this mode of playing the superiority of the player would be

manifest, and the “blushing honours” might rest with justice on his brow ; but playing after the fashion now in use the winning of the game depends not upon defence and science, but upon the goodness of the breaks that may fall to the lot of either competitor.

THE TABLE.

Cushions stuffed with Indian-rubber require considerable heat to keep them supple ; and, as they become quite hard when affected by cold weather, they are not exactly adapted for Tables in a private residence. Balls returning from a cushion stuffed with list will always act correctly, but the unfortunate passion for *fast Tables* has excluded them from most public rooms.* A gentleman informed me that he had a Billiard Table in his house when he was stationed in a remote part of India. The cushions had become so worn that the Table could scarcely be played upon. Not being enabled to obtain either workmen or fresh list, he set

* Extract from the letter of a gentleman upon whose judgment the greatest reliance may be placed :—“ I fully agree with you that the old cushions are, in every respect, preferable to the Indian-rubber ones, and may be made to run quite fast enough with an iron or slate bed and fine cloth.”

to work and re-stuffed his cushions with layers of superfine cloth. His friends, when they afterwards again favoured him with a visit, were quite astonished at the apparent improvement : the cushions were perfectly correct, and infinitely faster than before. When consulting a Billiard-table maker respecting Tables for friends, he has always asked me whether they required speed or truth, saying, at the same time, "both cannot be obtained." The more elastic* the cushion, the more incorrect will be the angle if it be played against with force ; and I have frequently seen a ball, after it has struck a second cushion, cross and re-cross the Table in nearly a direct line ; whereas its proper course ought to have been in an opposite direction, and its final place of rest probably five or six feet from where it stopped. How wretched to a player possessing an eye accustomed to geometrical demonstration must appear the running of the balls when returning from cushions so palpably untrue ; and how mortifying to witness the unfavourable result of a well-played stroke that ought, with correctness of angle, to have insured the winning of the game. If players would give up the ridiculous

* Indian-rubber cushions very fast and, consequently, very elastic, were placed upon the Billiard Table in a club of which I was a member. A losing hazard would present itself from a ball within the baulk. The object ball, when strongly struck, although hitting the cushion a foot outside of the line, would, instead of crossing over to the centre pocket, again return to the baulk. The frequenters of the room had the good sense to discard such cushions immediately.

railroad pace, useful only to those who are advocates for chance hazards, and content themselves with a speed that would insure correctness of angle, it would be highly beneficial to improvement,—would induce them to look forward to defence as a safeguard, and encourage them to persevere in the pursuit of a pastime from which many may be driven in disgust from the multiplied lucky hazards too frequently following in the wake of speed and hard hitting. If cushions stuffed with the finest cloth would yield a speed one length faster than those stuffed with list, I should say that a metal* bed and cushions of this description would produce a perfect Table, fast enough, in all conscience, for every purpose of scientific play; and, by playing on a Table so constructed, a knowledge of the game would be more easily acquired, whilst a greater number of points could be made from the balls.

In these remarks I believe I am fully borne out by the repeatedly-expressed opinions of some of the finest professional players and the very best of amateurs. Cushions, such as are now described, requiring no alteration, would prove more satisfactory to the maker, while the proprietors of Billiard Rooms would, I think, find players of merit more anxious to contend. Balls returning from cushions stuffed with Indian-rubber receive

* I specify metal, because in matches occupying several days, during which period upwards of twelve hundred games were played, I cannot recollect a single instance of the balls having run untruly.

an inclination to rise or jump, and, to prevent this, the cushion is made to project at the top; but a ball, hitting a cushion so constructed, touches it above the centre, and it will consequently imbibe a motion similar to one that has been struck by the player on the side. To remedy a defect so glaring and so inconsistent a cushion has lately been invented that will, I believe, receive the ball upon its centre; and I have an high authority for stating that the cushions now described come the nearest to truth for correctness of angle, and are brought to a state of perfection that he never expected to witness.*

One of the inventors of the Indian-rubber cushions being a Billiard Table manufacturer as well as an excellent player, and quite capable of judging correctly respecting the precision of an angle, placed his maiden cushions on a Table of his own, and proceeded, ere they were exhibited, to try their effect. The balls had not been many times struck before the incorrectness of the angle became apparent, and their immediate removal was contemplated. The Table, however, having been engaged by gentlemen at a given hour, and the intervening time not allowing of their being

* Since the above was written I had an opportunity of trying the cushions to which allusion is made. I found the angle more correct than the generality of Indian-rubber cushions; but the ball, on leaving the cushion, always jumped. To prevent this, the maker was under the necessity of going back to the old shape in order that the ball might be kept down.

replaced by others, the cushions were permitted to remain. The gentlemen arrived—they commenced playing. The speed, the extraordinary speed, filled them with amazement; and, as the games went on, their delight kept pace with their surprise. The inventor smiled, and, if I am rightly informed, thus expressed himself:—"If the public is pleased, the cushions may as well remain." But had the Table upon which the experimental cushions were placed been first played upon by scientific players, the absurdity would at once have been condemned, their removal would instantly have taken place, and cushions, too fast to be correct, would never have disgraced a game whose beauties and scientific properties are governed by, and wholly dependent upon, truth of angle. A fault also exists with respect to the shape of the cushion at the part adjoining the pocket. The shoulder is too much cut away; rendering a double impracticable if the ball be struck within two inches of the pocket, and preventing a correct angle should a canon be attempted. The ball will likewise remain in the baulk when, strictly speaking, it ought to have quitted it. These are blemishes, and ought to be corrected.* If the bed of the Table was made suffi-

* Since this was written, the improvements suggested, have been carried out by Burroughes and Watts, 19, Soho Square, London. The Tables now manufactured by that firm are as near perfection as possible. The cushions are full to the mouth of the pocket; the half circle is only

ciently wide to admit of its being twelve feet by six within the cushions, I think the cushion might be carried in a straight line to the pocket's mouth, leaving an opening of three inches, which dimensions form the size of the pockets of the Tables at Mr. Kentfield's rooms. The spot for the red ball should be only twelve inches from the cushion, and the baulk circle should not exceed eighteen inches in extent.

THE BALLS.

How scientifically soever a man may play, the power of his game will be materially injured if the balls swerve from their direct or proper course; and, as the *correct* execution of some strokes requires that the ball struck should travel nearly the length of the Table with what is termed "a dead strength," the winning or the losing of, perhaps, a most important game may depend entirely upon the correctness of the construction of the ball. The fineness of the cloth now in use, and the extraordinary speed of the Table, render the slight-

eighteen inches in extent, and the baulk line but twenty-seven inches from the lower cushion. The power of the cushions is equal to all that can be required, and, although sufficiently fast, the angle is as correct as a cushion can be that is stuffed with Indian-rubber.

est imperfection the more apparent ; and, as there is considerable difficulty in preserving the balls sufficiently perfect with reference to size and *equal weight*, the following remarks may not be deemed unserviceable.

If there be any moisture remaining in the ball it will be drawn forth when exposed to the power of the strong gas-light by which Billiard Tables are now illuminated, and a bias may consequently be the result. To guard against this as much as possible the balls should be obtained from the manufacturer exceeding two inches in size. They should be laid in bran or suspended in the Billiard Room a few months before they are wanted for use ; and when considered to be sufficiently seasoned, they should *then* be turned down to the size required ; and the best is termed “two-inch full.”

The marked ball should have but one spot, and that as small as possible.

The best balls that I have seen have been made by Messrs. Holtzapffel, 64, Charing Cross.*

I have lately been informed that from trials and comparisons with others the best balls are now to be obtained of Messrs. Burroughes and Watts, 19, Soho Square, London.

* A set of balls supplied by that Firm were weighed in my presence by Mr. Paine, Chemist, North Street, Brighton. By his minute scales there was only a difference of a quarter of a grain between the balls ! In ordinary scales the difference was not perceptible. Greater accuracy could scarcely be expected or obtained.

THE CUE.

A Cue 4 feet 7 inches in length is best for the generality of players; and, with it, more power over the ball will be obtained than with one that is longer. Mr. Bedford, exceeding in stature the average height, and excelling in every part of the game dependent upon correctness of hazard striking, plays with a Cue 2 inches shorter. This information is well worth the consideration of those who play with Cues of the length that are generally supplied by the makers—the standard being, I am told, 4 feet 10 inches. Some players select a light, whilst others prefer a heavy Cue. The weight, however, is of little moment, provided it does not possess a spring; since a proper management of the *hand* can regulate and make almost any Cue, if sufficiently small in the grasp, perform all that is required. For general purposes the Cue should be held loosely; but, if a side-stroke of extra or of unusual power be necessary, the Cue must then be tightly grasped. Other strokes, especially that described in Plate 66, require that the Cue should be forced, or pressed, as it were, into the ball played with. The term “pressed” is difficult to explain in writing;

but, a person qualified to instruct and willing to impart the secret, could make a pupil comprehend it in a single lesson. For the point of the cue a single leather is preferable to a double one.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SIDE STROKE.

The properties of the side stroke were discovered by Mr. Bartley, proprietor of the Billiard tables at the Upper Rooms at Bath, and it was first brought to the notice of Carr in the following manner :—Mr. Bedford states that Carr was a marker at the above-named Rooms ; and, that it was the custom, when business was slack, to amuse themselves by placing the red ball in the centre of the Table, the task being to try to hole the played-with ball, off the red, from the baulk circle, in one of the centre pockets, and to avoid bringing the object ball into the baulk. Bartley was the only person who could effect it, and he afterwards informed Carr that it was accomplished by striking the played-with ball upon its side.

CRAMP GAMES.

When great disparity of skill exists it is customary for the superior to play a Cramp game instead of giving the number of points required, and the games mostly in request at Brighton are—

THE WINNING, AGAINST THE WINNING AND LOSING—

21 UP.

This game is equal to the giving of 10 points in 24,

THE GO-BACK GAME—16 UP.

The score of the person playing this game is put back to nothing whenever his opponent makes either a canon or hazard. The game affords excellent practice; and, when obliged to play it 24 or 30 up, I have frequently scored nearly 100 points ere the game was concluded. As a great deal depends upon the style of game adopted, it is difficult to define the precise number of points to which it is equal; but I have always found

that I could play the game 24 up against any antagonist to whom I could have given 10 points in 24.

THE STOP, OR NON-CUSHION GAME—16 UP.

The person playing this game loses one point whenever his ball strikes a cushion. The game is difficult ; requiring from the player, great command over the played-with ball. I should prefer giving 12 points in 24.

THE COMMANDING GAME—16 UP.

The person playing this game is commanded which ball to play at. The odds are considered immense ; for a player, understanding the game, will drop, or double, the red ball nicely over a pocket, commanding his opponent to play at the other ; in doing which, should he fail in making a score, the red ball so placed, becomes a hazard for himself. When the score of the player commanding has reached 15 points, he can give a miss, masking the red ball, and then, by directing his adversary to play at it, oblige him to take his chance of either hitting it from a cushion, or of attempting to pass the intermediate ball through the agency of the side stroke, forming a curved line for the course of the ball.

[See Plate 30.]

ONE POCKET TO FIVE—16 UP.

The person playing this game selects a pocket. Canons are scored ; but no hazard is allowed unless it be made in the pocket he has chosen. Should he hole a ball in any other pocket the points are scored by his opponent. The game, as it is played by Mr. Kentfield, is one replete with interest and beauty. His excellence is so transcendent that were he to play a game of 100 up—1 pocket to 1 pocket—I firmly believe he could give 30 points to any player in England.

When a canon is contemplated never attempt to place both balls in favourable situations ; but let your attention be directed to one ; that ball, properly played, will leave another score, and by adopting judicious strength both balls may again be brought into use.

Never attempt a side stroke without chalking the point of the cue ; and remember, the more gently the ball is struck the more effectual will be the side twist.

The longest match, perhaps, ever played was between a French Gentleman and Mr. Bedford. It consisted of 300 games of 21 up. When 250 games had been completed, Mr. Bedford, suffering from fatigue, requested that a number of games should be named, at the expiration of which the match should cease. To the astonishment of Mr. Bedford his opponent named 50 more. The match occupied two days and a night, during which period the French Gentleman took nothing but fluids.

If the words "*Dum spiro spero*" be not engraved upon the cue, let their import be, at all events, engrafted on the memory. Had I not lived in hope and patiently awaited a favourable change, I should not have been the conqueror of the game of which an account is recorded in these pages.

It must always be remembered that the power of a fast Indian-rubber cushion is at least three times greater than one stuffed with list; and, consequently, that the stroke can be executed with a third less strength; and, likewise, that if the angle must be formed from the cushion, a strong blow will entirely destroy it.

If, in playing for a canon off the white ball, there be any chance of missing it, the striker should employ sufficient strength to carry his ball some distance from the red ; for, should he play it slowly and miss the score, he will, in all probability, leave a certain canon for his opponent. Upon the same principle one should never play the red ball slowly for a pocket, if there be the least chance of missing it ; but, if it be requisite to hole the adversary's ball, it must be done with the gentlest of strength ; for, if the score be missed, his ball will be left so close to the cushion that he may not be enabled to do harm. In witnessing the playing of two great Sweepstakes I observed that, on both occasions, they were won by Gentlemen who were fortunate enough to follow those who played upon the system, against which I would give the strongest caution.

There is a stroke now in use that is, at times, extremely serviceable. When either of the balls is so near the baulk line as to be pronounced playable, the player's ball must be placed as near to it as possible without touching, and then, by a push, the striker can hole his own ball in the corner pocket as often as he pleases. I remember that the white ball once came in such a position, when my score was 38, my opponent's 84, the game being 100. I holed my own ball in the same pocket 31 times, and even then the object ball was

scarcely moved from its original position. I have heard of inferior players that could score, from a ball so situated, as many points as were necessary to complete even the longest game. The stroke is worth practising.

Every person is, I believe, aware that, for general hazard striking, the proper position of the cue is horizontal; but there are some strokes that require a slight elevation of the right elbow; others are, I think, executed with more success with a slight depression. Many also require that the ball played with should be struck at a particular point. For instance—if to follow, the ball must be struck above the centre; if to remain nearly stationary, it must be struck below it; and if to recede, or what is termed “come back,” it must be hit lower still.

Never wilfully miss a hazard or canon. To disguise a game for the purpose of entrapping the unwary is dishonest.

“ He that inherits honour, virtue, truth,
 “ Springs from a lineage next to the Divine ;
 “ For these were heirs to God ; and we, their heirs,
 “ Prove nearest God when we stand next to them :
 “ Man, heir to these, is rich.”

THE MARKER.

I feel desirous, ere this volume be brought to a conclusion, of interesting the frequenters of Billiard Rooms in favour of the Marker. His situation is arduous, his hours of service long, and his remuneration much below his deserts. If it rains heavily and a cab is required, the Marker, braving the "pelting of the pitiless," hastens to procure one. Whatever, in short, may be wanted, and at whatever hour, the Marker steps forward as a prompt and willing agent to oblige. Although it has pleased the Almighty to drop every man in the very "niche he was ordained to fill," it is nevertheless the duty of all to regard with charitable feelings those persons whose station in society demand our aid; and there are few, whatever their means may be, but what can spare a trifle to alleviate the sufferings of those that really want, or to reward, in the shape of a Christmas gratuity, a deserving and well-conducted Marker labouring for our amusement.

LAWS OF THE GAME.

1.—If the striker, in making a canon or hazard, should by accident touch either of the balls with his cue, hand, or otherwise, the adversary can, if he thinks proper, claim it as foul, and have the balls broke; in which case the points made by such stroke are not scored, and the person claiming the foul stroke leads off.

2.—Foul strokes are made as follows:—namely, when the striker's ball touches either of the others; touching any ball while rolling; moving another ball in any way while taking aim, or in the act of striking; pushing the balls together when playing with the *butt* of the cue; playing with both feet off the floor; playing at a ball before it has done rolling; or by playing with the wrong ball. In this latter case, should a hazard or canon be made, the adversary can have the balls broke and lead off; and should no score be made by such stroke he can take the choice of balls and play.

3.—In breaking the balls you take them all off the table, place the red on the spot, and both parties play from the baulk.

4.—If the balls have been changed, and it cannot be ascertained by whom, the game must be played out

with them as they then are ; or, even if two strokes have been made before the mistake is discovered, it must still be played out in the same way.

5.—Should the striker, in making a canon or hazard, knock his own or either of the balls off the table, he cannot score the points made by such stroke ; and the opponent plays, but the balls are not broken.

6.—If a ball stops on the edge of the pocket, and afterwards falls in, either by shaking the room, table, or other accident, it must be re-placed as near the original place as possible.

7.—Should the striker, when in hand, play at a ball in baulk, his adversary has the option of scoring a miss, or having the balls re-placed and the stroke played again, or of breaking the balls.

8.—If the striker's ball touch another, he must play ; and should he make a canon or hazard the adversary can claim it as foul, or he can allow the points to be scored and the person to play on ; but should the person not score, it is at the option of the opponent to break them or not.

9.—Should the marker, whilst marking for the players, by accident touch either of the balls while rolling or not, it must be placed as near as possible to the place it would have occupied.

10.—If the last player should alter the direction of the balls while rolling, with the cue, hand, or otherwise, the striker may place it where he thinks proper.

11.—A “line ball” is when either the white or red is exactly on the line of the baulk; in which case it cannot be played at by a person whose ball is in hand, it being considered in baulk.

12.—If the striker’s ball is over the pocket, and he should, in the act of striking, miss it, but, in drawing his cue back, knock it into the pocket, he will lose three points, it being “a coup.”

13.—If the red ball has been put into a pocket, it must not be placed on the spot till the other balls have done rolling, should there be a probability of either of them touching it again, as the stroke is not finished till the balls stop.

14.—If the striker should touch his ball by accident, when taking aim, it is not a stroke, and the ball is to be re-placed; but should he touch it in the act of striking, then it is a stroke.

15.—If either of the balls lodge on a cushion it is off * the table; and should a canon or hazard be made it does not score, and the ball must be placed on the spot, or played from the baulk, according to what ball it is, white or red.

16.—Any person refusing to play the game out, after he has played one stroke, loses it.

17.—In a match of four the game is 31, and each person is at liberty to offer his partner advice.

18.—All disputes in the game to be decided by the marker, or majority of the company; but no person has

a right to interfere until appealed to by one or both players.

19.—It is a Love game when no hazard has been made by the loser.

20.—All Cramp games are played 16 up.

THE GAME OF POOL.

The game of Pool, like Handicap Sweepstakes, can amuse many players at the same time; and when there is but one table and several persons desirous of playing it will be found an agreeable occupation for them all. The stake is generally half-a-crown to the pool, and a shilling for each life that is lost; but the monotony of the game may be removed and the excitement and interest much extended by making the lives progressive. A shilling is paid for the first life taken; two shillings for the second, three shillings for the third, and four shillings for the fourth; in short, an extra shilling is added to every life taken in succession. I have seen a good hazard striker lose two of his lives early in the game, and with the third he has holed eight balls,

realizing, by the progressive system, as much as six and thirty shillings by the hand or innings. An increase of such a description stimulates the striker to play for lives, and thus removes in some degree, the extreme caution that is generally adopted.

1.—There are two ways of playing this game; either with as many balls as players, coloured or numbered, or with two balls only; but the first is generally played.

2.—Each player has three lives at starting. The white, or No. 1, commences by playing from the baulk, or having his ball placed on the winning and losing spot. No. 2 plays upon No. 1; and each person to play in the same order at the last player, except when he loses a life; then the player to play at the nearest ball. The balls to be played as they are marked upon the board or slate.

3.—The lives will be lost in the following ways:—by a player's ball being put into a pocket or knocked off the table; by making a miss; putting his own in a pocket, or knocking it off; by playing out of his turn at, or with a wrong ball. But should the striker pocket the ball he plays at, and by the same stroke hole his own or knock it off the table, then the striker will lose a life, and not the person whose ball was played at.

4.—No person can lose a life by playing at or with the wrong ball, if he has been led into an error by the marker, or by any of the party playing; the balls to be

replaced, and the stroke played again, but he cannot take a life.

5.—If the striker should miss the ball he plays at, and hit or pocket any other, he loses a life to the ball missed ; the person whose ball was put in by such stroke does not lose a life. Both balls to remain in hand till their turn to play again.

6.—When one or more balls (whether before or behind the STRIKER's) are in a line so as to prevent his playing at the last player's, the ball or balls are to be removed till he has played, and then placed on the spots they previously occupied.

7.—If any doubt should arise as to which is the nearest ball, the distance to be measured and decided by the marker, or by a majority of the company ; but if there should be two or more balls at an equal distance from the striker's, he may play at which he pleases.

8.—The person who loses his lives first is entitled to star or purchase the least number of lives remaining on the board or slate, by paying the same amount into the pool as he put in at the commencement ; and should the first refuse, the second has the same option ; and so on in rotation, except the two last players remaining in the Pool, neither of whom can purchase a star.

9.—Whoever takes a life continues to play till he either misses a hazard or pockets all the balls, in which case his ball is to be played from the baulk, or placed

upon the spot as at the beginning, and each person to play in his turn as before.

10.—When three players are left in the Pool, and one of them takes the last life of either of the others (the star being gone), the player may, if he thinks proper, play at the remaining ball; after the stroke they must divide if they have an equal number of lives.

11.—If the striker should pocket a ball, and by accident touch any other, the one moved must be re-placed, and the stroke considered foul; consequently he cannot claim a life from the person whose ball was put in the pocket; but should his own go in a pocket, or be knocked off the table, he will lose a life.

12.—If the striker's ball, and the one he is to play at, should touch so as he cannot make a miss, he may play at any other ball on the table; and if he puts such ball in a pocket will gain a life; but if his ball touches any other, he can have it up, if in his way, the same as in the 6th Rule.

13.—If the striker, after taking the last hazard in the Pool, should take up his ball before it has done rolling, he cannot claim the life from the person whose ball was put in by the stroke, as it is possible his own ball would have gone into a pocket if it had not been stopped.

14.—If a striker loses a life in any way, the next player to play on the nearest ball; and, if in hand, to play on the nearest ball from the centre of the baulk

line, either in or out of baulk, as the baulk is no protection, under any circumstances, at this game.

15.—If before a star two or more balls are holed by the same stroke, including the ball played at, each having one life, the first struck has the option of starring; but should he refuse, and one or more remain, the persons to whom they belong must toss for the star, if all wish to do so.

16.—If the striker's ball should stop on the spot of the ball removed, the ball which has been removed to remain in hand till the person's ball who played last has been struck off the spot, and then it is to be re-placed.

17.—If the striker should have his player's ball removed, and stop on the spot it occupied, the next player must give a miss to any part of the table he thinks proper, but does not lose a life by so doing. The miss to be given from baulk.

18.—If the striker has a ball removed, and any other than the next player's should stop on the spot, the ball removed to remain in hand till the one on its place, has played; but if it should happen to be the turn of the one removed to play before the one in its place, then that ball to be removed to allow the one originally taken up to play, and then to be again re-placed.

19.—If the shoulder of the cushion should prevent the striker from playing in a straight line, he can have

any ball removed for the purpose of playing at a cushion first. This is called an angled ball.

20.—The player who retains his lives longest is entitled to the sum remaining in the pool, after the expense of the table has been deducted ; or, if two remain, they divide the amount, when the lives are even.

21.—No person can take a ball after the two first have played without the consent of the whole of the players ; the marker, or any of the players, may correct any one when playing at, or with the wrong ball.

The following are the OPINIONS OF THE PRESS upon the second edition published in 1849.

[The fifty-three new Diagrams with explanations, commencing at Plate 91; the merits of the games of Mr. Kentfield and Mr. Roberts, with other matter inserted in the present edition, under the head of "General Observations," were written and published in 1858.]

The author of the present neat and elegant volume appears, not only to be a first-rate billiard player, but he is also one who can write well, and who deals with the theory of the game in an able and learned manner. He enters upon the subject *con amore*, and the consequence is that he has given us decidedly the best treatise that has yet been published on this most interesting and fascinating game. He commences the work with a slight sketch of the history of billiards, and then goes on to explain, by means of numerous diagrams, all the most difficult moves in the game. Practised and accomplished billiard players will, we have no doubt, derive much benefit, as well as pleasure, from a perusal of the work; and, as for beginners, it would, if carefully read, in a very short time enable them to master many of the principal difficulties which retard the progress of the inexperienced practitioner.

The racing season having terminated, we will endeavour, by devoting a paragraph to Mr. Mardon's work on billiards, to interest our readers with a pastime in every way adapted to the present period of the year. The game of billiards, as it is explained in the book before us, appears not only "purely scientific," but of intellect, offering to the performer the advantages of healthy action to both body and mind. The necessity of playing gently upon tables with Indian rubber cushions, will become apparent by perusing the following extract:—"The more elastic the cushion, the more incorrect will be the angle if it be played against with force, and I have frequently seen a ball, after it has struck a second cushion, cross and recross the table in nearly a direct line; whereas its proper course ought to have been in an opposite direction, and its final place of rest probably five or six feet from where it actually stopped. How wretched to a player, possessing an eye accustomed to geometrical demonstration, must appear the running of the balls when returning from cushions so palpably untrue; and how mortifying to witness the unfavourable result of a well-played stroke, that ought, with correctness of angle, to have insured the winning of the game. If players would give up the ridiculous railroad pace, useful only to those who are advocates for chance hazards, and content themselves with a speed that would insure correctness of angle, it would be highly beneficial to improvement—would induce them to look forward to defence as a safeguard, and encourage them to persevere in a pastime from which many may be driven in disgust from the multiplied lucky hazards too frequently following in the wake of speed and hard hitting." The preceding remarks will furnish the young player with a very important secret connected with the use of Indian rubber cushions, and the diagrams, showing what may be made from popular breaks, will supply the very best of

practice ; each plate may be considered a lesson, and the price of the book, beautifully got up, and further recommended by a very interesting description of the 500-up match between the author and Mr. Porker, amounts but to half the charge made by some London professors for only one hour's instruction.

One of the best written and most instructive works on this game has just issued from the press. It is the production of a gentleman named Mardon, one of the most scientific amateur players of the day, whose match of 500-up with Mr. Porker excited so much interest a short time back. The author's observations on the great advantages of caution, coolness, and good strength, illustrated by a series of upwards of 100 diagrams, will be found of inestimable advantage to young and inferior players, and cannot be studied too closely. That the greatest care is requisite when playing is evinced by the following paragraph, wherein it is shown that even the greatest player in the world is under the necessity of devoting to the game the utmost attention :—“The practice of playing upon tables with large pockets is much to be condemned ; the hazards become so easy that the player is not under the necessity of taking more than ordinary pains, and he is therefore disposed to make the hazard in a careless slovenly manner : whereas to constitute a sterling player upon a table of greater difficulty, it is necessary to play every ball to an inch, and to devote to the game the care and attention it deserves. Patronised by the nobility, respected and esteemed by all—placed, and deservedly so, as Mr. Kentfield is, on the pinnacle of fame, never have I seen the player that bestowed upon each part of the game a pains-taking equal to his ; but were he to relax, or fail in this essential particular, one might look in vain for the beautiful and exquisite precision that accompanies every stroke ; nor could he, without such devotion to the strengths, accomplish the extraordinary matches that he is under the necessity of playing. Fancy, for one moment, a disciple of the wild, elaborate school, playing the ‘go-back’ game with one pocket to five !” If our space permitted we might extract many other valuable passages ; we must content ourselves, however, with adding, that the work is beautifully got up, recommending it strongly to players of every grade.

Mr. Roberts, who last year challenged Kentfield to play a match for a thousand guineas, recently paid another visit to Brighton, and the lovers of the game had the pleasure of seeing some beautiful play between himself and Mr. Green, the conqueror of Stark, the American. The game played in the first and second match was 100-up, Mr. Roberts giving 20 points in each game. Both matches were won by Mr. Roberts. The third match was the canon game, Mr. Green receiving 2 points in 16. Mr. Roberts won that match with greater ease than he did the others. The room, 126, St. James's Street, Brighton, in which the matches were played is one of large dimensions, elegantly fitted up, and far surpasses all other billiard rooms in its means and appliances. Amongst the number of visitors were Sir David Baird, Sir H. Campbell, Col. Eld, Mr. Cockerell, Mr. Osbaliston, and Mr. Mardon, who were astonished and delighted with the brilliancy of the play, and who pronounced Mr. Roberts to be the finest general hazard striker possible. It was stated that Mr. Roberts had declared to Mr. Barnes, the proprietor of the room, that powerful as his game appeared, it had been benefited and improved by the perusal of Mr. Mardon's treatise on the game, a work decidedly of the greatest practical utility.

If we are to judge by the *low* price of Mr. Mardon's work on billiards, the object of the author appears to have been simply a desire to make the present players more partial to the game, and to give to the uninitiated an inclination to learn. It is strange that a game so beautiful and so generally played, should appear to be so little understood ; for amongst the host that play, not one in a thousand attains to any degree of eminence, and many, after years of application, forsake it altogether, because they have not been able to arrive at a point beyond mediocrity ; yet, if we are to give credit to the work now under notice, the game appears to be within the capacity of a child, and to require no more physical strength than what may appertain to a female. At a period when the old fashioned wooden-bedded tables were in use a great power was required, but the speed that is produced by the modern tables has brought the scientific part of the game quite within the reach of the weakest arm. In proof of which, the severest dressing Mr. Mardon ever received was from the hands of a lady ! This fact, showing what may be achieved by a proper system of defence, combined with *gentle strengths*, ought to convince all hard-hitters of the folly of trusting to strength of arm, instead of depending upon science.

The beauty and entire interest of the game of billiards consist in working a good break of the balls to the greatest advantage ; and this can be easily accomplished by placing them, after scoring, in such a position that another and another score will be presented. This, "the one thing needful," requiring, in the first place, nothing but consideration, may be effected by proper practice without much difficulty ; and when the young player has acquired the facility of making, by "judicious strengths," twelve or fifteen points in succession, he will have experienced a delight unknown to him before. The diagrams in Mr. Mardon's book present many breaks that can be worked to the greatest advantage ; and any gentleman possessing a table, or engaging a room by the hour, may, by following the directions given, very soon acquire a knowledge of the game that will not only produce a greater degree of *interest*, but will add also, if a player for money, very considerably to his *principal*.

The work, with gilt edges, is beautifully got up in the form of an album, is in every respect adapted to a drawing-room table, and must prove exceedingly interesting to all who are desirous of becoming acquainted with the game.

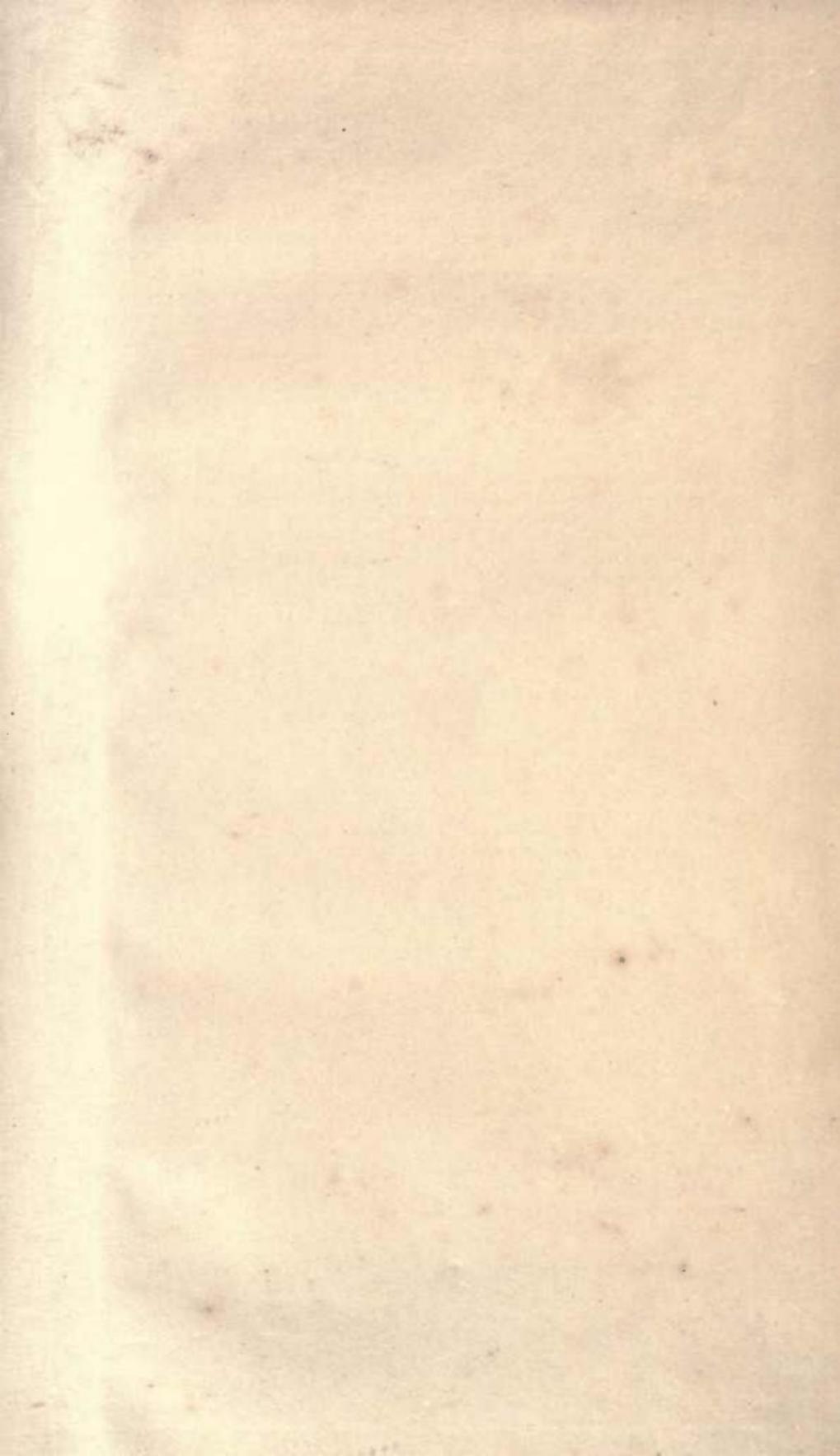
The following extract from the letter of an officer in India is, perhaps, the best proof that can be offered of the great value of Mr. Mardon's work :—
 "It is now more than a year since I fell in with your book on billiards, from which—to say nothing of the pleasure which its perusal afforded me—I have derived the greatest instruction in the game. In fact, I do not hesitate to say that I am at least twenty points in a hundred better than I was previously to studying it. There are a few strokes, however, regarding which I am anxious for further instruction. The strokes to which I allude are represented in plates 66, 68, and 78 ; and, although a pupil of Kentfield's, I am ashamed to say the strokes to which I allude have completely baffled and defeated me. I can fully appreciate the value of the stroke, represented in plate 68, as enabling the player to lay the object ball in a good position, and I really would willingly give one hundred pounds to be enabled to execute it. Amongst the diagrams which I have found most useful are 21, 28, 41, 46, 61, 63, 71, and 73. The strokes shown in plates 61 and 71 are especially valuable, and I have made from them some great

runs. By the stroke at plate 46—which, simple as I find it is, I should previously have considered impossible—I have repeatedly won games, which I had considered lost, whilst that represented in plate 28 frequently proved of essential service to me. I had been in the habit of playing for this hazard according to Kentfield's instruction, but certainly would not have backed myself to have made it more than once out of four times. Striking the ball, however, as directed in the work, I made the hazard seventeen times out of eighteen attempts. You will be pleased, perhaps, to hear that the perusal of your book has, within my knowledge, converted several most ordinary players into very promising ones, and the result of my putting it into the hands of a friend was, that, after reading it, he at once sat down and wrote to England, ordering a table to be sent out." The above, from a promising player, must be very gratifying to the author of the work, and sufficient to convince all lovers of the game that the daily practice from diagrams exhibiting valuable positions of the balls is the only certain road to improvement. In fact, whilst guinea after guinea has been thrown away by many in the endeavour to accomplish ridiculous and useless canons from a variety of cushions, others, at a trifling expense, have arrived at excellence by practising the breaks laid down in Mr. Mardon's book.

Mr. Mardon's book is the most accurate, the most ample, and in all respects the wisest, discreetest, best that has yet been published on the subject of billiards. It is profusely illustrated with diagrams, showing the position of the balls for the last nine breaks; and contains, moreover, one hundred and eleven other diagrams well adapted for practice. The author has brought to his task, not only the most minute knowledge of the game he writes about, but also that passionate enthusiasm in its behalf which, after all, is the most essential qualification for success in every undertaking, whether of pleasure or of business. The work, being replete with authoritative information on the subject of his favourite pastime, will be invaluable to the professed billiard player; but it will also be found to possess attractions for the general reader, whose interest is excited by the frequent recurrence of pleasant anecdotes. The following extract shows that even in the life of a marker there may be a dash of romance:—

"There was, some years since, at Bath, a marker of the name of Carr, who, although perhaps not quite so fine a player as the persons already named, possessed the power of executing certain wonderful strokes, dependent upon the side twist, greater than that of any other professor. It has been stated that the advantages derived from striking the ball upon its side was discovered by Carr; but whether it emanated from him or from another, it is certain that to the players and frequenters of the rooms at Bath it was as novel as it was surprising, and visitors, anxious to acquire an art, not only extremely useful, but one that imparts to the game numerous beauties, were unceasing in their enquiries respecting a secret through whose means they hoped to obtain similar power. After turning for a time a closed ear to their solicitations, Carr at length apprised them that the wonders producing so much interest were effected by the use of a twisting chalk that he had lately invented, and which he had then on sale. All eagerly purchased; and he assured them it afforded him much pleasure in complying with their requests. To carry out his views, he procured a number of small pill-boxes, and, filling them with the powder of the chalk commonly used in the room, sold it to a host of credulous customers at half-a-crown per box. How greatly soever fortune might have smiled upon Carr whilst engaged in the noble game of billiards,

there was unfortunately another, of a royal character, that held him captive, engrossing all his thoughts—all his spare time, and which, notwithstanding hours of devotion offered at the shrine of the presiding goddess of his idolatry, produced nothing but misfortune. Wearyed with disasters, disappointed in his expectation of success, and discontented with circumstances immediately connected with his professional pursuits, he came to the determination of “seeking his fortune” in another clime, and at once embarked for Spain. Presenting himself at the billiard rooms of the various towns through which he passed, he succeeded in beating and in thoroughly astonishing every competitor that dared to approach him. Performing feats, by means of the side twist, far beyond their power of conception, he realised a very considerable sum; but, ere it could be employed in a way that would have proved of service to him in the time of need, he again fell back upon his former habits, and, unfortunately, once more fully entered into the destructive game from which he had previously been so great a sufferer. The fickle goddess still proving adverse to his hopes, he was under the necessity of retracing his steps, and finally landed at Portamouth with scarcely a shoe to his foot. Whether players of those days were less particular than persons of the present period is not for me to determine; but it is no less strange than true, that, even in so deplorable a garb, he no sooner made his appearance at the billiard table than he met with a gentleman willing to contend. From this person he won, I believe, seventy pounds; and, quitting the room with the money in his pocket, he lost no time in discovering a shop at which he could get “fully and completely rigged.” Attired in a blue coat, yellow waistcoat, drab smallclothes, and top boots, he paid on the following day another visit to the same room, where it happened that he met his antagonist of the previous day, who, being a fine player and devoted to the game, lost no time in challenging the stranger to play. The result of this match terminated as the former, and Carr once more became a considerable winner. At the close of the match the gentleman observed that he was truly unfortunate in having met with, on succeeding days, two persons capable of giving him a severe dressing. Carr, making himself known, thanked the gentleman for the metamorphosis his money had occasioned, and wished him a good morning.”



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